INFORMATION LITERACY AND THE SERIOUS LEISURE PARTICIPANT: VARIATION IN THE EXPERIENCE OF USING INFORMATION TO LEARN

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Abstract

Serious leisure is the pursuit of a hobby, volunteer activity or amateur pastime undertaken at such a level of engagement that it allows for the development of a meaningful and sustained career and identity to be constructed around the acquisition and pursuit of its unique skills and knowledge. It is the avenue through which an individual can create for themselves an identity, life and 'career' derived from and revolving around their interests and passions. And it is, above all things, driven by information and the way in which the individual experiences that information. As a result, the career or 'life' which the serious leisure participant constructs and experiences will be determined by their ability to access, interpret, utilise and incorporate information into their serious leisure activities. To date; however, when studies have sought to examine the information world of serious leisure participants it has only been by way of information seeking behaviour and information needs. While successful in developing an understanding of the behavioural aspects of serious leisure they do not account for the equally significant experiential element of information engagement that occurs within serious leisure participation. The aim of this study is, then, to fill that knowledge gap by gaining an understanding of the variation that exists in regard to the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity.

Utilising a constructionist perspective and a phenomenographical methodological approach this study has uncovered the qualitatively different ways in which serious leisure participants, through their interactions with various phenomena, constitute their

social environment and construct meaning for the phenomenon in question – information literacy. To that end, data has been gathered via a series of focussed, semi-structured and one-on-one interviews concentrating on the interviewee's experience of information literacy. The interviewees, twenty-two in total, were sourced from the South-East Queensland and Victoria metropolitan regions. Each participant was deemed to be engaged with a Serious Leisure activity or interest and doing so within the area of 'heritage' (as defined by this study). Their suitability for inclusion in the study was assessed by way of a pre-interview based on Robert Stebbins' six components of Serious Leisure participation. No two participants shared the same specific serious leisure activity nor were pursuing it within the same organisation (such as a museum, gallery or other such establishment). As a result, all twenty-two participants displayed unique ways and avenues through which to engage with the central theme of 'heritage'. Participation in the study was equally split between males and females and there was representation across a broad age range from late 30's through to early 80's. Data analysis of those interviews resulted in the formation of four distinct but related categories of description that represented the critically and qualitatively different ways in which Serious Leisure participants experienced information literacy. They identified that information literacy was experienced as *acquiring new information*, *helping the learning community*, *self-awareness* and *entertainment*. Those categories, in turn, established an outcome space that provided an understanding of the relationships that exist among the four categories of description.

Due to the absence of studies dealing with the information literacy experience of people participating in a serious leisure activity this paper represents a genuinely original

contribution to both fields and adds a notable contribution to the currently available literature. It is also the first study of serious leisure and one of the first studies of the leisure field to utilize phenomenography as its research methodology. As a result it is anticipated that the rich data uncovered during the course of the study will be of greatest interest to those people working with and within the fields of serious leisure and information literacy. It is projected that the findings outlined within this study will impact on the way in which each of those areas – serious leisure and information literacy- looks at and pursues their particular field. In addition, it is expected that any person or organisation interested in creating information literacy programs, whether at the community, workplace or educational levels, that are tailored to the way in which people actually experience using information to learn, will be interested in what this study has revealed.

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

QUT Verified Signature

Signature:

Date: 6/11/2014

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The research contained within this thesis is conducted at the intersection of two wholly distinct research domains -information literacy and serious leisure. It is an intersection that, until the advent of this thesis, has been examined only briefly and only by way of a behavioural perspective. In addition, it is an intersection that, as this research shows, does not have to be divergent but can merge together to form one cohesive stratagem for understanding the uniqueness and commonality that exists between the two research domains. This initial chapter provides a background to that research as it was conducted within this study. It explains the question that drove and motivated the research as well as outlining the significance of the study to both research domains. Beginning with an overview of the research area in question it then identifies the gap in knowledge that this study aims to fill. That is then followed by an outline of the research problem, an explanation of how that was addressed and an overview of the methodological approach that was adopted. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the key concepts and terminology that both guide and inform the study.

1.2 Background

Serious leisure (SL), a term coined by Robert Stebbins in the 1970's to explain and categorize those voluntary, unpaid avenues of engagement which provide a 'career' (moral and ethical rather than vocational) an identity for participants, has, since its inception, carved out a niche within Leisure Studies (Hartel, 2003, 2005). Despite the

prevailing tendency to only see vocational occupations as worthy of the word 'career', Stebbins and his conception of serious leisure have managed to open people's eyes as to the merit of those 'pastimes' which have, typically, been seen as merely frivolous. In so doing he, along with the researchers such as Hartel (2003, 2005, 2006, 2008), Kari (2001, 2007), Arai (1997, 2000) and Raisborough (1999, 2006, 2007), have managed to divide and sub-divide the seemingly innocuous area of interest into something which, through its stratification, makes clear the genuine significance of those activities which people choose to do and through which they might gain pleasure and establish for themselves an identity which is not fully nurtured by their vocational life. He has established a world of professionals, amateurs, publics, 'serious' leisure, 'casual' leisure, 'project-based' leisure, hobbyists and career volunteers (Stebbins, 1979, 1982, 1997, 2001, 2007, 2013). In short, he has located concrete examples of the daydream wherein a person can be other than the population at large might consider them to be.

Despite the extensive work undertaken to locate those 'sites' wherein identity may be established and a non-vocational 'career' be enjoyed (Stebbins, 1979, 1982, 1997, 2001, 2007, 2013; Hartel, 2006, 2007; Kari, 2001; Tsaur, 2008; Urban, 2007), little has been done to examine the way/s in which participants in these serious leisure activities understand and constitute information which is the inarguable bedrock of any career, activity, identity or life. Indeed, to date, research conducted in the serious leisure arena has concentrated primarily on establishing the existence of participants within the area of serious leisure. Having established that serious leisure is an actual, measurable phenomenon (Stebbins, 1979, 1982) further examination/exploration has, primarily, focused on only those areas in which participants can be found, the ways in which they

interact with the world and the manner in which they construct an identity around the leisure activity they pursue. However, to date, little has been done to explore their information literacy experience. That is, how they conceive of information, how they access information and how they utilise information to support their serious leisure activity and the lifestyle/identity it affords them.

1.3 Research Problem

Serious Leisure (SL), developed by the researcher Robert Stebbins to explain those activities within a person's life that are undertaken without coercion, for no financial gain and without any obligation (Stebbins, 2002) has, over the past 30 years, developed into a notable area of research within the field of Leisure Studies. In its examination of people's leisure pursuits it has allowed researchers to gain an understanding of the way in which the average person is able to develop a 'career' and identity which revolves around their self-chosen leisure pursuits (Robinson and Godbey 1997). However, despite the research opportunities presented by Stebbins work and the questions SL raises in relation to people's experience of information it has remained a seriously neglected area of study (Hartel 2003). That point was raised during the 'Taking Leisure Seriously: Information Realities in Leisure Time' research panel which was conducted at the 2006 meeting of the American Society for Information Science & Technology (Hartel, 2006) and calls were made for more work to be conducted that examines the relationship between the serious leisure practitioner and their information environment (Hartel, 2008). However, despite acknowledging a shortfall in work that addresses the information agenda (as it relates to serious leisure) (Kari and Hartel 2007) research conducted since the conference

has been ‘muddled’ and hampered by self-imposed limitations. Chief among those limitations, it would appear, is the lack of a suitable framework around which to construct its arguments, conduct its research and derive its conclusions. Information Literacy provides that framework.

Information literacy, which has established itself as an essential component of education in the twenty-first century (Batt 1998; Boekhorst 2003; Bundy 1999, 2002) can best be defined as an “understanding and set of abilities enabling individuals to ‘recognise when information is needed and have the capacity to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (Bundy 2004, p.3). Just as serious leisure provides the means by which an individual can be empowered to establish, for themselves, a career and identity, information literacy provides a means by which individuals can empower themselves through the development of personal knowledge (Kuhlthau 2004; Behrens 1994; Bruce 1997). Where serious leisure deals with the creation of career and identity through immersion in an area of deep personal interest, information literacy concerns itself with the development of personal skills as a means by which to take ownership for one’s own education and intellectual development (Bruce 1997). Information Literacy also provides a framework for people to utilise, evaluate, seek and generate information. Conversely, it provides a means by which a person’s experience of information - the way in which they locate, evaluate and generate information - can be examined and understood

This research contends that information literacy provides the theoretical base upon which examination of information use by serious leisure participants can be most successfully

undertaken. This study also argues that as previous attempts to perform such a task, using systems such as ELIS, have adopted a particularly specific and narrow focus on only the technical elements of the information process such as 'information seeking' (which constitutes only one avenue through which to engage with and understand information literacy), they have been unable to account for participant's information literacy experience. It is important to note, however, that this study is not, strictly speaking, a serious leisure study. Rather, it is a study of the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity within the arena of 'Heritage'. As a result, the findings are driven by the information literacy component of my study and framed by Phenomenography as the research methodology.

Arguments for the value of leisure and leisure studies have been made often and at length. Many of them have found a home with 'The World Leisure Organisation', an international non-profit, non-governmental body of individuals and organisations that has done much, in its fifty-plus years of operation, to establish the merits of leisure as a field of inquiry and, more importantly, an integral part of a person's everyday life. Central to the WLO's vision for leisure is that it is "integral to social, cultural, economic and sustainable environmental development and the wellbeing of individuals, communities and nations (Modi, 2011, p.14). That articulation of value and scope is echoed by leisure researchers, such as Stebbins, Modi, Hartel and Rojek, who see leisure as being intimately connected to the living world (the environment) and those who live within it (Stebbins, 2011). In addition, it has " direct links to such other social phenomena as

education, health, religion, technology, tourism, work, ethnic communities, urbanization and migration, family, mass media, culture and the arts" (Modi, 2011,p.14).

Outside of those areas there is a direct link between serious leisure and the fields of quality of life/wellbeing, gender, retirement/unemployment/ therapeutic recreation, library and information science, youth/delinquency, social entrepreneurship and entertainment and popular culture (Stebbins, 2011). Indeed, continued participation with serious leisure activities (and leisure in general) provides, for the individual, the chance for both lifelong learning and opens doors to fuller social inclusion and participation. That value of that is apparent, especially in regard to education and library science professionals (Fulton & Vondracek, 2009). Lifelong learning requires resources in order for the learning to take place and for the learning potential to be maximized. The library, state or public, would appear to be an obvious partner for that learning either as a site at which to appropriate the necessary materials or to conduct the learning experience itself. Education, availed through tailored and guided study, provides the means by which specific knowledge and skills can be acquired by the individual. In those instances, education provides an added dimension to lifelong learning as it provides a degree of specificity that the individual cannot acquire, or choses not to acquire, through self-education. In more specific areas such as tourism, therapeutic recreation and event analysis, leisure is playing a significant part in the quality of life. Even more significantly, leisure is playing a key role in the function of areas such as gerontology and retirement as well as arts and science administration (Stebbins, 2012). The key ingredient

with each is that leisure plays a substantial part in people's enjoyment of life at a basic level, including their ability to remain healthy and personally satisfied.

Serious leisure has also been making a positive impact in the area of natural history and sustainable natural environment. Whereas in previous generations (or centuries) it was amateurs, such as Schliemann, Matthew and Anning who through involvement in their leisure activity uncovered significant finds in the areas of botany, zoology, archaeology, biology and geology, today their place has been taken by the serious leisure participant. Bird watchers keep track of the growth, decline and migration of bird species. Fishing enthusiasts do the same for marine life while serious leisure participants who focus their energies on flora and other ecosystems provide invaluable information on those particular areas.

A further reason why serious leisure and, by extension, information literacy should be examined, is through the positive experience it provides. Indeed, one of the unique traits of serious leisure (all leisure) is its being focused exclusively on positive activity (Stebbins, 2011). That is, positive activity to the person or persons engaged with the serious leisure activity. In being a positive activity and, therefore, an affirmative experience, the psychological wellbeing of those persons engaged with the activity is enhanced and their overall 'wellness' as individuals and members of a society (either in their interpersonal, workplace or educational relationships) is enriched (Stebbins, 2004). In having a direct impact on interpersonal relations, human psychology and social development (Stebbins, 2011)"leisure is a cultural universal" (Chick, 2006, pp.50-51).

The universality of leisure, therefore, means that its importance and value, in all of the ways previously mentioned, is also universal.

Similarly universal is the role of information in modern life. We have been immersed in the Information Age for some time now (Rifkin, 2005) with data being produced at an ever-increasing rate and made available more efficiently than ever before (Stebbins, 2012). In turn, serious leisure comprises one of the activities through which information is produced and disseminated, for many of the reasons previously outlined. Therefore, developing an understanding of the way in which information literacy is experienced by serious leisure participants, will make an invaluable contribution in understanding leisure itself. Given the properties and benefits of leisure as outlined– and its impact on the economic, cultural and social worlds – that understanding will be invaluable. Subsequently, research dealing with serious leisure and information literacy, in particular research which unites the two research domains, is not only meaningful, it is also necessary.

In understanding the information literacy experience of serious leisure participants, suggestions can be made as to ways in which their particular needs might be best met in an LIS environment. The findings can then be extrapolated to aid in the development of programmes that will serve the information needs of any special interest group as well as to advance understanding of serious leisure as a distinct and separate area of inquiry. To facilitate that research, a set of criteria was imposed, chief amongst which is that participants had to be operating within an area (or interest) that fitted with the assigned definition of ‘heritage’. Finally, having identified the gaps which currently exist in the

body of research dealing with the information practices of serious leisure participants the objective of this study will be to answer the question, '*How do people engaged in a serious leisure activity experience using information to learn?*'

1.4 Method

This study adopts constructionism as its epistemological orientation and interpretivism as its theoretical perspective. Both function as concepts that inform the researcher's outlook and guide them in a particular direction in regard to their research orientation through "the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1994, p.118). Within a constructionist epistemology, "meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (Crotty, 1998, p.43). As a result, knowledge, which consists of truth and meaning, is pieced together via socialization and social interaction. For the constructionist, people are always at the heart of meaning even if, across different cultures, those meanings are constructed differently even when addressing similar phenomena (Crotty, 1998, p.9). Similarly, interpretivism "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998), p.67) and provides a means of understanding human thoughts (Pickard, 2007). Knowledge, truth and meaning are constructed by way of a person's lived experiences and are indivisible from the individual (Sandberg, 2005). Subsequently, when selecting a research methodology it is imperative to find one that can reflect reality as seen through the eyes of the research subjects. Phenomenography, which explores variation in the way people "experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena

in, the world around them" (Marton, 1986, p. 31), provides the means by which that may be achieved.

Within this project, the aim has been to explore variation in regard to the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity (within the area of 'heritage'). Doing so by way of a constructionist perspective means looking at the variety of ways in which the serious leisure participants construct meaning for the phenomenon in question - information literacy. To that end, the resource materials utilised during the analysis phase were obtained via a series of in-depth and semi-structured interviews. A total of twenty-two interviews were conducted during the final stage of data collection with thirty interviews completed over the three phases of the study. The material gathered was, subsequently, transcribed and analysed to form the 'outcome space' for the phenomenon under investigation. That outcome space will, in turn, be represented as a set of related categories called the 'categories of description' which articulate the qualitatively different ways in which the phenomenon in question was experienced by the interview cohort. Within this study, the phenomenon is information literacy and the research cohort consists of serious leisure participants operating within the sphere of 'heritage'.

1.5 Significance of the research

The information literacy experience/s of people engaged in serious leisure activities is a topic which, to date, has received little attention by the research community. Thanks largely to the contribution of Stebbins, the founder of serious leisure, and Hartel, one of

the most prominent of serious leisure researchers, much work has been done to establish serious leisure's credentials as a meaningful area of study. However, the work that has been undertaken has primarily confined itself to uncovering those areas of recreation that would qualify as venues for serious leisure activity. Little has been done to examine the ways in which participants in those serious leisure activities experience using information in order to learn or, in a broader sense, how they experience using information to learn in order to support, facilitate and develop their serious leisure activity. That situation has changed, somewhat, with the publication of Lee and Trace's (2009) examination of information use and understanding within a hobbyist community and with Hartel's examination of the way in which Serious Leisure operates within the area of Library and Information Science (2003). However, outside of that anomalous work, little else of note has been published (Reih, 2004) and, despite encouragement from within the social sciences (Kari & Hartel 2007) for more work to be done, there does not appear to be any noticeable upswing in research being conducted within this area.

Given that Stebbins works primarily within the field of sociology, it has been posited that the project also has a sociological application. While it chiefly focuses on attaining an understanding of the ways in which people cognitively frame and experience information, the fact is that any attitude held in regard to information will necessarily impact on the way in which people function within their social world. Also, one primary use of information is in socializing. Therefore, some understanding of human interpersonal engagement will emerge and be of some benefit to the discipline of sociology and, possibly, to the behavioural sciences. Ultimately, however, this study outlines the

findings of preliminary research into the question of how people engaged in a serious leisure activity, within the area of 'heritage', experience information in order to learn.

Another significant aspect of the research is that it unites two disparate but complimentary areas of research, information literacy and serious leisure. Information literacy provides a means by which the researcher can assert the significance of leisure as a significant site of engagement with information because it (information literacy) does not put boundaries on where information can be found or how it can be utilised. All that is significant to the information literacy concept is that a situation occurs wherein one party has displayed an engagement with information – whether through acknowledging the need for it, demonstrating where and how to find it and effectively utilizing it to resolve a particular (personal, vocational, social) issue or problem (Bundy 2004). There is no ascribing of 'higher' or 'lower' values for sites of information engagement and there is a deliberate neglect of activities which occur within the social world because information literacy recognizes that information is, by its very nature, a socializing entity. Therefore, any leisure activity must be reliant on information because all human activity is, in some fashion, social. Similarly, all social activities are, in some way, reliant on information. Ultimately, with all leisure activities being social and all social activities requiring engagement with information there can be no logical reason to not acknowledge that information is both critical to leisure but is the actual cornerstone of all leisure activities. Information literacy legitimizes those claims and provides a platform by which to examine the interrelationship between information, leisure and those people who participate in serious leisure activities.

It is anticipated that these research findings will prove most valuable to those working within the areas of sociology, information management and information technology, researchers with an interest in the areas of serious leisure and information theory as well as anyone dealing with the information needs of a special-interest group. Those groups, in being provided with an understanding of the way in which information is constituted by people involved in a serious leisure activity can either tailor their research and educational activities to address the imbalance suggested in this report, place greater emphasis on the need for a focus on approaches to information within the area of leisure or find a blueprint for future research into a previously neglected area of the serious leisure debate.

1.6 Key terms and concepts

Serious Leisure

Is the "systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (Stebbins 1992, p.48).

Heritage

According to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, the term 'heritage' refers to "all the things that make up Australia's identity – our spirit and ingenuity, out historic buildings, and our unique, living landscapes. Our heritage is a

legacy from our past, a living, integral part of life today, and the stories and places we pass on to future generations" (www.environment.gov.au.heritage/). The Netherlands Institute for Heritage, on the other hand, defines heritage as "the tangible (objects) and intangible (stories) expressions of a society's culture that have been handed down from generation to generation. Heritage is culturally diverse… Heritage represents the cultural capital and inspirational power of people and communities. It is how they shape their identity and image. Heritage makes a society aware of its origins and its culture"(www.erfgoednederland.nl/english/organisation/heritage-and-meaning). As can be seen from the two definitions, 'heritage' refers to both a society's historical past and its cultural present. It incorporates the tangible (artifacts) and the intangible (words, music, a sense of place, belonging and self). Therefore, when selecting those areas which may be considered to function under the umbrella of 'heritage' (even if they have not been previously ascribed as such) we can look to any area or endeavour which assists an ethnic group in defining and understanding its identity. It can include activities that revolve around the genealogical or chronological past but it can also include activities that revolve around the cultural present such as theatre, art or literature. That is the way in which 'heritage', within this study, has been defined and applied.

Information Literacy

Information literacy is best constituted as a "suite of different ways of experiencing using information to learn" (Bruce, 2008, p.5), an "intellectual skill, a habit of mind necessary for negotiating our information world" (p.3) and is, at its core, about learning (Bruce, 2008).

1.7 Structure of the Document

This chapter provided an overview of the study, as it will proceed over the course of the following chapters. To that end, Chapter 2 will present a review of the current literature, divided into the key areas of serious leisure and information literacy. Chapter 3 provides a description of the methodology employed in this study, its ontological end epistemological foundations, as well as a rationale for its selection and the choices that need to be made in order to ensure reliability and validity in its execution. In addition, an overview of the study's three phases - two pilot studies and one main study - is included along with detail regarding the interview cohort. Chapter 4 outlines the study's findings with each category of description explained in detail including the dimensions of variation inherent in each category and concludes with an examination of the outcome space that has emerged from the categories of description. Chapter 5 discusses the implications and significance of the findings in relation to Serious Leisure, Information Literacy and Experienced Identity (one of the significant findings to emerge from the research), the research gap they fill and the future research they might generate or impact upon.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to the research question that drives the thesis, an overview of the significance it (the question and research) has for both the fields of serious leisure and information literacy as well as detailing the scope and limitations of the research project outlined within this work. Beginning with an explanation of the

research question and how it was arrived at, the chapter then identifies the gaps that exist within the current body of knowledge relating to the research area. Having identified those gaps it makes clear how filling them is of importance to the research domains mentioned (information literacy and serious leisure). A discussion is then provided regarding how the question will be addressed and answered within this thesis and an overview of the research methodology selected for this research project is then provided. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the key concepts that inform the research as well as an overview of the structure of the document as a whole.

Chapter 2- Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research and literature relevant to this study, which has been undertaken. Given that this project includes two distinct areas of interest, serious leisure and information literacy, the chapter was divided into separate sections as a means by which to allow for a concentrated examination of each of the research foci. The first section deals with serious leisure and outlines its constituent elements, prior research; reasons for scarcity of previous studies and perceived future issues for the research domain. The second section explores information literacy, outlining its contextual boundaries, research history, avenues through which research can be conducted. It concludes by highlighting the gap that exists within the current body of knowledge relating to the research area and explaining how this research will fill that gap.

PART 1: Serious Leisure

2.2 Serious Leisure

Within the cycle of a 'typical' day, most people will divide their time undertaking one of four basic activities - paid work, unpaid work, self-care and free time (Robinson and Godbey, 1997, p.11 in Hartel 2003, p.3). It is within that last category that leisure, which is defined as the "uncoerced activity engaged in during free time, which people want to do and, in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both), use their abilities and resources to succeed at this" (Stebbins, 2007, p4), occurs. And it is, naturally, around leisure that

Stebbins' serious leisure concept has been formed. Beginning with emergent research in the early 1970's, serious leisure has developed to be the theoretic framework and typology that bridges and synthesizes the entire field of leisure, as we know it (Stebbins, 2007; Hartel 2005) illustrating the distinctive features, interconnectivity, relationships and similarities that exist between each area of leisure engagement. Work began with serious leisure and it is from that leisure dimension that the perspective takes its name. However, that is not to suggest any superiority of serious leisure over its casual and project-based counterparts. On the contrary, the perspective's central concept comes from the first of the dimensions to be uncovered and examined at length (Stebbins, 2001). In practice, the perspective provides a mechanism that can be used for identifying and classifying any activity as a specific type of leisure (Spurgin, 2008) as well as understanding the outcomes, on a personal level, of undertaking a leisure activity of a specific kind and at a specific level of engagement. Indeed, rather than merely illustrate modes of leisure activity it is the way in which Stebbins' conception of serious leisure outlines the modes of engaging with leisure activities which is its strongest suit (Spurgin, 2008). To that end, a leisure activity can cross the leisure boundaries due to the context in which it is engaged.

2.3 Types of Leisure

As has been explained above, serious leisure (SL) was developed in the early 1970's by Robert Stebbins (who has been responsible for the majority of work done within the field) as a means by which to explain and explore those 'uncoerced' activities which people undertake despite their offering no apparent financial gain, notion of obligation or

sense of duty (Stebbins, 1982, 1992). The key component in Stebbins theory is its focus on those activities that are considered to be 'serious' in nature (hence the term, 'serious leisure'). It is intended to denote the state – be it solemn, earnest, sincere or careful - into which participants enter when they undertake one of these activities and to distinguish itself from the type of 'seriousness' which is associated with gravitas, solemnity, anxiousness, distress or depression. Serious leisure, while it may be approached with the greatest degree of reverence for the topic or activity at hand, is intrinsically linked to pleasure. However, serious leisure pursuits, while they afford great pleasure, are not undertaken for the same type of instant gratification that accompanies purely hedonistic activities. On the contrary, the pleasure they provide is of a more lasting nature and more involved with the actual mechanics of pursuing the activity than the end result.

According to Stebbins, leisure can be broken down into three distinct categories - casual, project-based and serious (Stebbins, 1982, 1992, 2001, 2005, 2007) - with each operating in direct contrast to the other. Casual leisure is defined as being an "immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it" (Stebbins, 1997, p.18). Where it differs most notably from its serious counterpart is in it being fundamentally hedonistic in nature and engaged in for the primary purpose of enjoyment. According to Stebbins (2007) the avenues through which casual leisure is expressed and experienced are:

- Play (such as tennis, fishing,),
- Relaxation (sitting, sleeping, casually walking),
- Passive entertainment (reading, viewing films, listening to music),

- Active entertainment (gaming or gambling),
- Sociable conversation,
- Sensory stimulation (eating, drinking, sex, sightseeing),
- Casual volunteering, and
- Pleasurable aerobic activity (Stebbins, 2007).

Researchers, most notably Rojek (1997, 1999), Stebbins (1997) and Byrne (2006), have also identified it as the site of 'deviant leisure', which draws into question the notion that leisure is always a necessarily healthy outlet for human activity (Stebbins, 1997, 2006). That is not to denigrate all activities considered by researchers to fall within the 'deviate' category merely that for certain of them the enjoyment experienced by one participant is counterbalanced by the lack of enjoyment experienced by another (or the other) participant.

In contrast to the 'serious' form of leisure, 'casual' leisure offers no 'career' as such. However, it is considered to be an integral element within the field of leisure (Stebbins, 1997, 2007, 2009) and constitutes the types of activities most regularly pursued by the general public. Indeed, it can be suggested that casual leisure may well be the stepping-stone to more serious pursuits and, even in the advent that does not happen it helps to 'condition' participants to the pursuit of an activity driven by enjoyment rather than obligation.

A widespread misconception is that casual leisure, as a leisure category, is relatively unimportant and shallow as those activities driven by hedonism ('urge' or 'impulse') can

have no redeeming features and a category that examines them can have no academic worth (Stebbins, 2007). However, that attitude has been criticized for failing to acknowledge casual leisure's significance and proliferation in people's lives (Hartel, 2003; Stebbins, 2007; Shen & Yarnal, 2010). To that end, Stebbins identified five distinct benefits associated with casual leisure:

1. Fostering creativity and serendipitous discovery,
2. Providing education entertainment or 'edutainment' value,
3. Affording personal re-generation/re-creation,
4. Developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships and
5. Contributing to participants' well-being and quality of life

Project-based leisure is seen to be short-term, one-off or occasional in frequency, involving a degree of complexity, typically creative in nature and undertaken during time free of 'disagreeable obligation' (work or other non-leisure responsibility), (Stebbins, 2011). Of the three forms of leisure project-based leisure is the most recent and, subsequently, the least well-researched. That is not to suggest it is in any way inferior to or less popular than the other forms and, on the contrary, it has been suggested that it is as prevalent as serious leisure (Stebbins, 2003). It has, however, emerged through rigorous examination of both serious and casual leisure. Where originally it was believed that "between them, casual and serious leisure cover the entire leisure domain" and that "casual leisure can also be defined residually as all leisure not classifiable as amateur, hobbyist or career volunteering" (Stebbins, 2001, p.305) (in other words, all that is not serious leisure) that is now understood to be an oversimplification of the entire leisure

field (Stebbins, 2005). Although it is still not developed to the same level as the other two forms of leisure it is now recognised as a distinctive form in its own right. It also highlights the possibility, acknowledged by Stebbins himself (2005) that further forms of leisure do exist and will, in time, be uncovered. A further possibility is that what has previously been seen as one form of leisure may come to be seen as existing within a different format altogether. As technologies develop and offer new methods of engaging with leisure there is every possibility that what was once deemed casual leisure (for example, conversation) may be seen as also existing within the serious realm.

Serious leisure, on the other hand is, systematically pursued, long-lasting in duration, requires significant effort (in terms of acquiring skills and performing tasks), and involves the participant becoming enmeshed in a serious leisure social world with an ethos unique to their area of interest (Stebbins, 2011). To that end, serious leisure is defined as being the "systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist or volunteer activity" (Stebbins, 1992, p.3). Serious leisure was developed by the researcher Robert Stebbins in the early 1970's as a means by which to explain and explore those 'uncoerced' activities which people undertake despite their offering no apparent financial gain, notion of obligation or sense of duty.

According to Stebbins, involvement in a serious leisure activity could occur within one of three avenues, amateur, hobbyist or career volunteer, each of which conforms to the key requirement that their pursuit be motivated by pleasure. Those types are, 'Amateurs'– those who are linked with their professional counterparts often through the importance of

the office they hold and/or the time they devote to their unpaid activity, 'Hobbyists – who lack the professional counterpart – and 'Volunteers', who engage with a professional organization in order to offer their services for no fee other than to be associated with the function of the organization. A more detailed explanation is as follows:

Amateurs are found within a range of activities such as entertainment, sport, science and the arts where they share a public association with their professional (where professional is defined in economic, rather than sociological, terms) counterparts (Stebbins, 1979, 1992, 2011). Within the serious leisure domain, amateurs were originally subject to a complex macro-sociological definition which was reliant on an equally intricate system of work practices, tradition, standards, identity and culture used to define professionals, their binary opposite (Spurgin, 2008). However, that has been simplified and professionals are now seen to be those who are "dependent on the income from an activity that other people pursue with little or no remuneration as leisure" (Stebbins, 2007, p.6). Although seemingly innocuous, that does have an implication for serious leisure as financial dependency is seen to develop prior to the other potential traits of a macro-sociological definition of professionalism (Spurgin, 2008). Therefore, in focusing purely on financial dependency serious leisure researchers are more able to categorise activities and participants as professional and, therefore, amateur counterparts.

Due to their relationship to professionals and the fact that both groups may be serving or appealing to the same public, amateurs are said to exist in a specific dynamic called the P-A-P (Professional-Amateur-Public) dynamic (Stebbins, 1992,2007; Spurgin, 2008).

Hobbyists, unlike amateurs, lack a professional counterpart or alter ego; however, they may have commercial peers and a public that is interested in the work they are doing (Stebbins, 1979, 1992, 2011; Hartel, 2003). Those publics may be friends, family and/or other hobbyists (Spurgin, 2008). Like amateur pursuits, hobbyist activities require both commitment and perseverance while, at the same time, provide durable benefits for participants (Spurgin, 2008). Typically, it is defined as the "systematic and enduring pursuit of a reasonably evolved and specialized free-time activity" (Hartel, 2003, p.230) and, within Stebbins system of serious leisure, the principles of which guide and inform this study's approach to serious leisure, hobbyists are grouped into five distinct categories:

1. Collectors
2. Makers and Tinkerers
3. Activity Participants (in non-competitive, rule-based pursuits)
4. Players of sports and games (in competitive, rule-based activities with no professional counterparts) and
5. Liberal arts hobbies

(Stebbins, 2003)

The categories are considered to be relatively self-explanatory, with the possible exception of the liberal arts hobbyists (Hartel, 2003) who are involved in accumulating knowledge 'for knowledge's sake' (Stebbins, 1994). Their activity does not yield a physical expression of their interest; however, they are just as involved in the information process, if not more so, than those involved in the other categories because, for them, the sole aim as well as the raw materials and product of their serious leisure activity is

information itself (Hartel, 2003). Among hobbyists, the most common, visible and accessible form is 'collecting' and, unsurprisingly, it is the most widely studied expression of hobby-ism (Gelber, 1997). Hartel's diagram of the Types of Leisure (Hartel, 2003), seen in Figure 2.1, shows the relationship between the leisure categories and the type of leisure they can be expected to fall within. Heritage, the leisure focus of this study, could potentially exist across all of the serious leisure types dependent only on the element of 'heritage' (as defined by this study) that the serious leisure participant chose to engage with.

Interestingly, from an LIS perspective, information is seen to play a critical part in the social worlds that emerge from hobbyist activities. Hartel, who has written extensively on hobbyist activities within the serious leisure realm, says that the "lack of any centralized bureaucracy causes a dependence on mediated communication, namely: books, magazines, chat rooms, newsgroups, and various other information forms" (Hartel, 2003, p.231).

Career Volunteers are also defined via a series of dimensions (Cnaan et al, 1996)

1. Free Choice (volunteering occurs without coercion)
2. Remuneration (no financial benefit is obtained)
3. Structure (volunteering may occur formally in legally chartered organisations or informally in ad hoc groups or networks of associates free of familial bonds)
4. Intended Beneficiaries (participatory but non-financial benefit obtained by both the volunteer and the organisations in which they volunteer).

(Based on Stebbins, 2007, 2011; Smith et al, 2006)

Using those four dimensions to form one cohesive statement, it has been suggested that an appropriate definition for volunteering is as "uncoerced help offered either formally or informally with no or, at most, token play and done for the benefit of both other people and the volunteer" (Stebbins, 2007, p.9). The key ingredient in that definition is 'lack of coercion'. While a person may freely opt to undertake a volunteer activity it does not necessarily follow that their choice was made without any form of coercion. Indeed, their involvement in the volunteer activity may have been necessitated by some legal or social obligation. Subsequently, when determining a truly volunteer endeavour the chief criteria must be that it is performed without any external pressure or impetus (Stebbins, 2007, 2011; Smith et al, 2006). An interesting addition to the arena of 'volunteer as serious leisure practitioner' is Stebbins' conceptualization of 'career volunteers'. They are those people who, through a commitment and dedication to a volunteer activity or to the volunteer field in general develop a career (Orr, 2006). What is interesting about that classification is that their expression of serious leisure occurs within a field rather than in relation to one specific venue, location, pursuit or interest. Volunteering, the act of giving one's time freely and without remuneration (Stebbins, 2007) becomes the avenue through which they experience leisure. It is, almost, an abstract expression of leisure, made tangible only when put into the context of where that person undertakes their volunteer activity.

There can be a great deal of cross-over from one group, Amateur, Hobbyist and Career Volunteer, to the next and individuals may, at any one time, belong to more than one (Stebbins, 1997, 2006: Hartel, 2007; Spurgin, 2008; Shen & Yarnel, 2010). The uniting

element being that, in each case, they are involved for reasons which generate pleasure but which are not purely hedonistic in nature. That is in direct contrast to 'casual leisure', which is seen to be, in general, opportunistic, selfish, self-indulgent and unfocussed with an emphasis on sensory stimulation and hedonistic gratification (Rojek 2005, p. 179). Activities such as games of chance, gambling, social conversation, window-shopping and petty crime all fall under that banner. Unlike serious leisure, casual leisure does not have as its aim the attainment of status or the acquisition of identity. In short, it is a way in which to pass time rather than a way in which to use time to achieve certain goals. None of that is intended to dismiss the value of casual leisure. Indeed, it is viewed as an integral part of modern society, a key ingredient in the international economy and a means of release from the stifling burdens of community, responsibility and discipline (Stebbins 2001, pp.65-67).

Types of Leisure

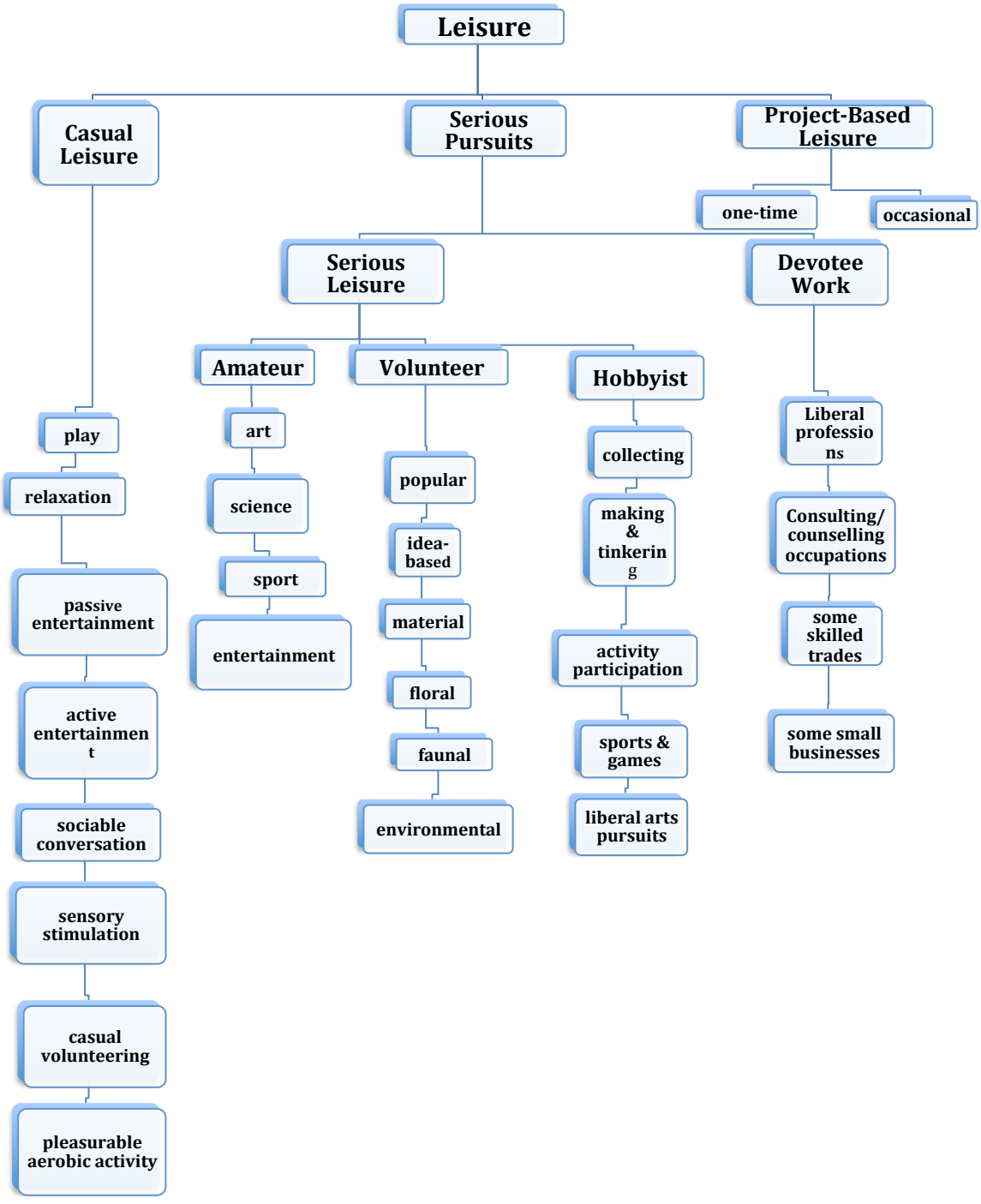


Figure 2.1 - Types of Leisure (based on Stebbins 2007, 2011 , adapted from Hartel, 2003; and Cnaan et al, 1996)

2.4 The Elements of Serious Leisure

According to Stebbins (1992), Serious Leisure is comprised of six core, interrelated elements (see Appendix 1):

They are:

1. Perseverance,
2. Career,
3. Significant effort,
4. Unique ethos,
5. Durable outcomes &
6. Strong identification

Taken as a whole they outline the ingredients (of human behaviour) necessary to elevate a person's leisure activity to the status of *serious* leisure. They also provide an understanding of the attraction of purposeful and uncoerced leisure to the individual (Stebbins, 1992; Hartel, 2010). That is, in putting forward the time and energy necessary to acquire the skills needed to undertake a focused leisure activity and the willingness to adopt the particular philosophical code that guides that activity at its *serious* level, the individual will be rewarded with a *career* that revolves around an interest of their own choosing.

2.5 The categories of Serious Leisure

The first of the categories, *perseverance*, is the key ingredient in distinguishing a serious from a casual leisure pursuit (Stebbins, 1979, 1982, 1992, 2001). It deals with a person's

willingness to persist, in following their serious leisure activity, through a range of impediments such as anxiety, failure (of themselves or an external body, such as a sporting team, which is the focus of their serious leisure activity) fatigue, injury, illness, the elements, stage fright, embarrassment and the distress of grappling with new modes of information practice (Arai, 1997; Fine, 1988; Gibson, Willming & Holdnak, 2002: Major, 2001; Stebbins, 1981;Yarnal & Dowler 2002). That need to persevere through conditions such as those outlined can be either occasional or repeated (Stebbins, 1982).

The second quality of serious leisure is that, through a series of stages, turning points and future outcomes it leads to a discernible *career* (Stebbins, 1992; 2001). Traditionally, a 'career' has been looked upon as something that can only be derived from those activities that are financially motivated. Religious vocations, which might be seen as having a career trajectory, were deemed 'callings' thereby avoiding any clash with the monetary element inherent in a 'real' career (Hartel, 2010). That was the prevailing attitude until Stebbins, through his introduction and application of serious leisure, redefined those boundaries and expanded the understanding of what can constitute a 'career'. According to Stebbins, the career that may be developed by a serious leisure participant consists of five distinct stages. It begins with, naturally, the *beginning phase* (in which the participant first becomes aware of their serious leisure activity and begins to engage with it), followed by a *developmental phase* wherein a systematic approach to learn about the activity is adopted, an *establishment phase* in which a proficient level of skill and knowledge is acquired, a *maintenance phase* at which an expert level of proficiency is reached and a *stage of declination* in which physical and mental skills diminish with

advancing age (Stebbins, 1992). Those stages are also referred to as the Serious Leisure Life Cycle (Watkins & Bond, 2007) and were documented by Heuser in his 2005 study of the serious leisure career trajectory from awareness to introduction to immersion to decline and, ultimately, retirement of female lawn bowlers.

Third of the six qualities deals with the *significant effort* participants put into gaining and developing the specialized knowledge, experience, training and skills which allow them to pursue their serious leisure activity at the career level (Arai, 2000; Gravelle & Larocque, 2005; Stebbins, 2006; Shen & Yarnal, 2010). This element also connects to the concept of perseverance "which can be understood as the manifestation of significant effort in face of adversities" (Shen & Yarnal, 2010, p.164). That connection and the substantial commitment made on behavioural, psychological and physical levels, by serious leisure participants has been examined by several researchers, most notably Bryan (1977) and Scott and Shafer (2001).

The fourth quality of serious leisure, *unique ethos*, refers to the attitudinal, philosophical and idealistic homogeneity that exists within those people pursuing the same serious leisure activity (Stebbins, 2001, 2004). An 'ethos' is the "spirit of community of serious leisure participants, as manifested in shared attitudes, practices, values, beliefs, goals, and so on. The social world of the participants is the organizational milieu in which the associated ethos – at bottom a cultural formation – is expressed (as attitudes, beliefs, values) or realized (as practices, goals)" (Stebbins, 2007, p.12). In sharing a particular set of "ideals, values, or sentiments" (Shen and Yarnal, 2010, p.164) participants create for

themselves a social world that revolves around their serious leisure activity. Membership into the group and access to that social world is, therefore, dependent on potential new members exhibiting their possession of those values (Brown, 2007; Green & Jones, 2005; Scott & Godbey, 1992). In addition, members of that social world will be able to understand the coded language and practices that exist within their particular serious leisure community (Stebbins, 2006). Similarly, as the process of acquiring the 'language skills' necessary to operate within the social world requires a notable degree of sustained and substantial effort there is a connection to Stebbins' elements of perseverance and significant effort. Also, the drive necessary to maintain the life and vitality of the particular serious leisure activity adds a degree of permanence that is necessary for the establishing of a social world (Stebbins, 2007). Unruh (1980) also suggests that the way in which the participant will display these attributes is determined by their "social proximity to activities and knowledge vital to the on-going functioning of a social world" (Unruh, 1980, p.280). In that regard, unique ethos will be mediated by the type of engagement an individual has with their serious leisure activity and whether they can be, as Unruh claims, viewed as one of four types – 'strangers', 'tourists', 'regulars' or 'insiders' (Unruh, 1980).

The *durable outcomes* or *durable benefits* that constitute the fifth quality deal with the positive spiritual and intellectual enrichment of serious leisure participants (Stebbins, 1992; 2006) as a result of their involvement in a serious leisure activity. In general, benefits are an agreeable, positive outcome whether anticipated or not (Stebbins, 2007) and "may be anything appealing to the participant, whether physical, social,

psychological, or something else" (Stebbins, 2007, p.12). There are eight durable benefits or outcomes commonly experienced by people engaged in a serious leisure activity. They are:

1. *Self-actualization* which results from the individual developing and becoming aware of their talents, potential and capabilities (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991)
2. *Self-enrichment* deals with the process of increasing a person's spiritual and mental assets through the accumulation of experience (of both the activity in general and the social world which develops around it) (Stebbins, 2007).
3. *Self-expression*; which entails expressing individuality and ability through the application of talents, skills and abilities (Stebbins, 2007).
4. *Regeneration or renewal of self* combines with feelings of accomplishment to deal with the emergence of an identity, which revolves around the serious leisure activity. Also includes regeneration of the individual after being involved in an activity (typically a paid vocation) that does not enrich the self (Stebbins, 2007).
5. *Feelings of accomplishment* arising from successfully undertaking the serious leisure activity and being accepted within its community
6. *Enhancement of self-image, social interaction and belongingness* arising from developing status within the serious leisure community as well as in establishing an identity revolving around the serious leisure activity and being recognised within the specific serious leisure community.
7. *Lasting physical products of the activity* are such things as a painting, scientific paper, piece of furniture or similar.

8. *Self-gratification* is the combination of superficial enjoyment and deep personal fulfilment (Stebbins, 2007, p.11).

Those benefits/outcomes can best be dealt with and understood in two distinct categories, 'self' and 'group'. Relating specifically to durable outcomes that nurture the individual, Stebbins identified the strongest of those products to be: *self-enrichment, regeneration or renewal of self, self-actualization*, *self-expression*, *self-satisfaction (feelings of accomplishment*), *self-image* and *self-gratification ("the combination of superficial enjoyment and deep personal fulfillment"* Stebbins, 2007, p.11). Also within that grouping but considered to be less persuasive in terms of personal reward were *recreation* and *financial return*. Representing the 'group' outcome was *group maintenance*, which refers to the efforts made by participants in a SL group to ensure that it develops and remains a viable entity (Elkington, 2010). While that is constituted as a collective outcome it is still intimately connected to an outcome that directly enriches the self (Roberts, 1997). According to Stebbins the rewards of undertaking a serious leisure activity are what frames every serious leisure career (Stebbins, 2007). Each SL participant is engaged in a continuous search for those rewards and it may be a considerable length of time before they and a deep level of fulfillment (regarding the serious leisure activity) are attained.

The sixth and final quality, *identification*, refers to the process by which "participants in serious leisure tend to identify strongly with their chosen pursuits" (Stebbins, 2004, p.53). According to Stebbins, that process of identification evolves through "substantial

emotional, moral and often physical investment" (Elkington, 2010, p.334) and it can occur at the personal and interpersonal (social) level (Brown, 2007; Gibson et al., 2002; Green & Jones, 2005; Yair, 1990,1992). It is under that final category that the individual becomes fully enmeshed in a serious leisure career and lifestyle.

Stebbins has been criticised for, among other things, neglecting the importance of (social) identification and failing to elaborate on serious leisure's ability to provide, for its participants, a strong and positive social identity (Jones, 2000). That criticism has focused mainly on a failure to expand on the enduring nature of serious leisure activities (a key criteria in serious leisure as outlined by Stebbins – see Appendix I) and the way in which they are able to afford for their participants a social identify of their own choosing (as opposed to the identity bestowed on them by society). In turn, that ability explains the reasons why participants are willing to persevere, acquire specific skills and adopt the unique ethos that informs and drives their serious leisure activity. According to Jones (2000), it is serious leisure's ability to create social identities and do so within a group space that is at the heart of its enduring nature. Belonging to a social group and being seen by others to be a member of a group, not merely an isolated individual, is considered to be an "important mediator of an individual's cognitive, affective and behavioural processes" (Jones, 2000, p.284). Issues of self-worth, self-image and self-esteem are, therefore, intimately connected to the individual's selection of and placement within a group of their choosing (Jones, 2000, 2006). Therefore, for critics such as Jones, social identity more so than career potential lies at the heart of serious leisure's enduring appeal.

While there might be a certain degree of shallowness to Stebbins' articulation of the serious leisure concept it still provides a viable framework onto which other ideas can be added as well as providing a solid starting point for researchers. Indeed, in the area of social identity, much work has been done which explores that aspect of serious leisure. Previous works have focused on diverse areas such as barbershop singers (Stebbins, 1996), bass fishers (Yoder 1995) football fandom (Gibson, Willming & Holdnak, 2003), marathon running (Baldwin, Ellis and Baldwin, 1999), dog sports (Gillespie, 2002), second life gamers (Urban, 2007), historical re-enactors (Hunt, 2004) and cult fandom (Lawrence, 2014). Of particular interest to this study is the research done by Orr (2006), which, drawing on Stebbins work with serious leisure, found that identity construction among volunteers operating within the heritage arena was driven by their serious leisure activity. It could also be argued that, in his introduction of the 'semiotic self' (2011), Stebbins has attempted to address, more thoroughly, issues of identification in serious leisure. However, much of what he has developed, to this point, reads as a means by which to further distinguish serious leisure from casual and project-based leisure. In so doing, it works to further marginalize serious leisure (which Stebbins already argues is typified by its marginality) more so than to explain how the 'semiotic self' emerges out of the process of identification with the serious leisure activity (Stebbins, 2011).

In summation, those six elements, or qualities, which define serious leisure are 'perseverance' in pursuing an activity, finding a 'career' within the activity being pursued, making particular and unsupervised 'effort' to acquire the knowledge, training or skills necessary to pursue an activity, experiencing a number of 'durable benefits' from

pursuit of the activity (self-expression, self-realization, belonging, personal growth), redefining an individual's social world around the 'unique ethos' which is generated by the leisure activity and, finally, identifying strongly with the activity being pursued and the serious leisure social world in which it is experienced.

2.6 Researching the field: past and current examinations of serious leisure.

When serious leisure was first developed, its aim was to provide a means by which the study of leisure could be framed (Lee and Trace, 2009). It sought to establish a means by which forms of leisure could be categorised (casual, project-based, serious) and leisure activities (play, relaxation, sociable conversation and others) could be seen as belonging to one of those categories. It was, at its heart, a classification system (of approaches to an activity) albeit one which has been criticized for masquerading as taxonomy (Spurgin, 2008). However, regardless of the discrepancy between the way in which it sees itself (its design) and the way in which it actually operates (its functionality), serious leisure has evolved to be the typology and theoretical frame that connects and fuses the entire field of leisure (Stebbins, 2006; Hartel, 2010).

Research conducted within the arena of serious leisure has, typically, fallen into three categories - classification, deconstruction and informational. The first category, 'classification', which can be referred to as serious leisure's 'foundation studies', consists of attempts made to uncover the variety of different areas in which serious leisure may be found as well as both defining and solidifying the categories of description as devised by

Stebbins. The researcher most synonymous with that endeavour is Stebbins himself (1979, 1982, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2013) and it is his work, particularly his early studies in which he examined the leisure practices of amateurs operating in the arts, sciences, sport and entertainment, which informs, guides and dominates the entire field of serious leisure research (Stebbins, 1992; Gould, Moore, McGuire & Stebbins, 2008). After Stebbins had produced the initial conceptual statement of serious leisure significant classification work was undertaken by Parker (1992), Rojek (1997), Hartel (2003), Hutchinson & Kleiber (2005), Graham (2004) and Orr (2006). In the work of Parker, Graham and Orr, volunteering was brought to prominence as a valid site of serious leisure engagement while Hartel's focus was on the hobbyist realm of cooking. In each case, the researcher's emphasis was on the location, excavation, validation and classification of a site that would yield information about the field of serious leisure.

Given serious leisure's relative youth as a research domain, that approach has dominated most of the more-than-thirty years since it was first established. However, in recent years a shift has become apparent (Rojek, Veal and Shaw 2006), and more research is being produced which deconstructs serious leisure and finds, not new sites of engagement, but sites of previous neglect and omission. That deconstructive process forms the second category of serious leisure research and seeks primarily to refine serious leisure's parameters by drawing attention to and, ultimately, removing what are perceived to be its cultural (Lo Verde, Modi & Cappello, 2013) and gender biases (Raisborough, 1999, 2006, 2007; Wheaton & Tomlinson, 1998; Bartram, 2001; Gillespie et al., 2002; Heuser,

2005; Stalp, 2006; Dilley & Scraton, 2010). While those works account for only a small percentage of the serious leisure research output they constitute a significant growth area (Dilley & Scraton, 2010). Their contention being that, in order to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the leisure domain studies need to be positioned in relation to the political, social and cultural contexts which frame experience. As that cannot be satisfactorily achieved by focusing solely on masculine contexts it is imperative that "women's involvement in serious leisure is contextualized in relation to women's everyday experiences and identities" (Dilley & Scraton, 2010, p.137). In the work of Lo Verde, Modi and Cappello (2010) that inclusiveness extends to non-Western cultural groups whose experience (of leisure) is, to date, absent within the literature which informs and guides serious leisure research.

The third category, which in this document has been dubbed 'informational', consists of that research which examines information practices within the field of serious leisure. Of the researchers who have dealt with this aspect of serious leisure, Hartel (2003, 2005) was the first to apply Stebbins' theory to studies within the information sciences (Khoo, 2008) and she has continued to produce work dealing with information behaviour within the context of serious leisure. Stebbins himself has championed a relationship between serious leisure and library and information science (Stebbins, 2009). However, in proposing a mutually beneficial relationship between the two fields his sole focus in on the twin elements of retrieval and dissemination of information. He suggests that leisure consists of two types of information. The first of those, fulfillment-related information, involves significant personal effort "acquiring and using a combination of specially

acquired knowledge, training, experience or skill" (Stebbins, 2009, p. 627) and it is the knowledge and training components that he sees as being of greatest importance to LIS. The second type, social-world information, deals with a person's ability to interact within both the universal social-world and the social world that is constructed around their leisure activity. However, despite identifying two informational elements that may connect LIS to serious leisure he has stopped a long way short of engaging with the human experience of using information in order to learn (arguably the primary function of information). Resultantly, for Stebbins, information only exists as a tool and a thing to be used in order to achieve a certain goal or attain a certain state of being.

That attitude and view of information mirrors the works of Hartel (2003,2007); Kari & Hartel (2007); Agosto & Hughes-Hassell (2005); Spurgin (2008), Fulton (2009) and Lee & Trace (2009), all preeminent researchers in the field of serious leisure, in which information is examined only within the parameters of seeking, use and need. That approach sees information as the apparatus by which to answer a specific question and focuses primarily on the skills and competencies required to utilize the tools of information technology. As with Stebbins, the interrelationship between information and information user/seeker is ignored. The question for those researchers is not, therefore, how do serious leisure participants experience using information in order to learn but, rather, how is information sought and used. In bypassing or ignoring the experiential element, they have omitted one of the the quintessentially human aspects of information engagement.

Where this research differs, and it does so markedly, is that it takes a relational view of information literacy. Subsequently, experience is given primacy over behaviour (as it was defined by Case, 2012) and the focus is not merely on a set of competencies and skills (which characterizes the behavioural approach). Rather, in the learner-centric approach adopted by this study, focus is on the ways and processes through which students/learners engage with information (Bruce, Hughes, Somerville, 2011). The end result will be a series of findings which tell us more about the relationship people engaged in a serious leisure activity have to and with information than a study which revolves around the practical, mechanical way in which they seek and use data.

2.6.1 Information and Serious Leisure

Historically, studies dealing with serious leisure have focussed on either establishing the validity of the perspective, uncovering potential sites of serious leisure engagement or, most recently, challenging the way in which the serious leisure categories are constructed. Encouragingly, however, there have been recent calls for more work to be conducted that examine information behaviour and attitudes towards information within serious leisure activities (Kari and Hartel, 2007). The argument being that what generates pleasure and is an expression of free will, thought and action constitutes an area of greater significance than the more mundane problem solving which dictates a person's workaday life. However, despite that, few studies have sought to examine in detail the ways in which people engaged in a serious leisure activity constitute information or even their relationship to information (Lee & Trace, 2009). To date, research has dealt with the information-seeking behaviour of low-income people (Chatman, 1985,1991; Spink &

Cole, 2001), information encounter in the context of reading for pleasure (Ross, 1999), people's need for, use and seeking of paranormal information (Kari, 2001), sexually related information seeking on the web (Spink and Ozmutlu, 2002), online information seeking behaviour and the role that information sources play in the context of self-development (Savolainen and Kari, 2004), the role of information in gourmet cooking (Hartel, 2006) and human information behaviour in a public knitting group (Prigoda and McKenzie, 2007) .

Despite the general neglect which has accompanied information use by serious leisure participants there has been an emerging trend, albeit a minor one, that challenges the previously narrow focus on only that information which occurs within an academic setting (Hartel 2003, p.3). That particular area of investigation has been dubbed 'everyday life information seeking' (ELIS).

2.6.2 Everyday life information seeking (ELIS)

To date, most of the work that has been done on information seeking has focussed its attention on one of three contexts - work, research or education (Agosto, 2005). That is despite most information seeking being involved with endeavours not related to any of those three contexts (Savolainen, 1995). Indeed, a typical daily pattern, for the average person, might consist of turning on the television, radio or computer in the morning to hear the weather forecast, reading the newspaper headlines while eating breakfast, asking their spouse what time they expect them to return home from work that evening, search the Internet during the day for information relating to a personal issue and so on throughout the course of the day (Agosto, 2005). Indeed, Savolainen, who introduced the

term ‘everyday life information seeking’ in 1995 to describe that non-workplace/educational/research behaviour, and whose work has guided much subsequent ELIS research, devised the concepts of “ ‘way of life’ and ‘mastery of life’ for understanding the role of information-seeking in individuals’ daily problem-solving activities” (Agosto, 2005, p.143). According to Savolainen, ‘way of life’ refers to the order in which people engage with life activities such as household chores and hobbies. ‘Mastery of life’, on the other hand, refers to the way in which everyday issues and problems are approached in a way that is commensurate with a person’s value system (Savolainen, 1995). Despite the primary focus being on non-work related activities, Savolainen did acknowledge that everyday life and work are often intertwined (Agosto, 2005) an approach that was echoed by Given’s 2002 study of undergraduates’ everyday life information seeking which showed the way in which the two spheres – everyday and academic- were inextricably linked.

Given ELIS’ focus on areas of human information endeavour outside of the work, education or research spheres, it is of little surprise that it has proven attractive to IL researchers. That, coupled with a strong focus on the ways in which groups of people seek information within their communities (Adams, 2000) has seen it widely adopted by the IL research community. As the ‘group’, rather than the individual, has been the subject of most serious leisure research (which can be seen in the studies mentioned throughout this paper) and serious leisure is commonly spoken of within the context of communities, ELIS has been seen as a good fit for serious leisure researchers. However, despite its general acceptance, there remains a problem with the way in which it focuses

on the activity (information seeking) and the process ('way of life', 'mastery of life') but not on the individual's experience of using information. That is one of the gaps this research seeks to fill.

2.6.3 Differences between ELIS and the research being conducted in this project

There are several key differences between Everyday Life Information Seeking and the research conducted in this thesis. First and foremost, ELIS focuses its attention squarely on information 'seeking' whereas what this research is interested in is the way in which people experience information in order to learn. Information literacy is expressly concerned with using information to learn. ELIS, on the other hand, occupies itself with only one element of the information agenda, namely the process of seeking out information. Learning, which is central to information literacy, is not mentioned by ELIS. There might be an assumption that learning takes place; however, it is not expressly stated and, as a result, it cannot be said to form part of the ELIS agenda. As a result, the scope of ELIS is considerably smaller than that of research that uses Information Literacy as its theoretical base.

Despite those differences, there are certainly correlations between the work undertaken by ELIS researchers and the research being conducted in this study. Chief among those similarities is the connection between people and information. Both consider past research that deals with the information agenda to have focussed only on institutionalized environments such as the workplace, academia or education while overlooking those

private and personal spaces that occupy the majority of a person's life. That oversight provides both with a target 'population' and environment. However, whereas ELIS looks at 'everyday' information seeking, this study utilizes serious leisure as the focal point for its research. That creates a very clear demarcation between the two 'projects'. In addition it points to one of the key limitations of many ELIS studies which is their focus on only those information practices that occur within a 'life challenging' situation rather than one in which life is nurtured by the individual's relationship to information (Hartel, 2003, p.3). 'Life challenging' does not suggest a situation where the individual's life is in any kind of peril. On the contrary it merely refers to a set of circumstances where a person's ability to function within the social realm (their 'everyday life') is at a highly stressful juncture which requires the making of a significant decision, the outcome of which will impact significantly on their ability to return to a less stressful state of being. This study, along with ones undertaken by Hartel (2003), Lee and Trace (2008), Ross (1999) and Kari (2001) represents one of the only works to examine attitudes towards information experienced during pleasurable activities.

2.6.4 Reasons for scarcity of prior studies

Hartel (2008) suggests that a reason for the scarcity of such studies is the belief that information is not a critical component of leisure and "the essential features and forms of leisure are vague and undifferentiated, leisure is a challenging empirical research topic" (Hartel 2003, p.3). The answer to that problem may lie with information literacy. Information Literacy (IL), is defined as "an understanding and set of abilities enabling individuals to 'recognize when information in needed and have the capacity to locate,

evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. In a broader context, information literate people have been described as those who 'know when they need information and are then able to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively use the information to address and help resolve personal, job related, or broader social issues and problems' " (Bundy 2004, p.3). If that theory is applied to an examination of information use within a serious leisure activity it may help to overturn the prevailing attitude which is unsure of the place information has within leisure. IL does not presuppose that any particular area or activity is exempt from the influence of information. On the contrary, it views information as an integral ingredient in all activities. Combining an IL focus with the use of phenomenography as the methodology of choice may also provide a way in which to overcome the empirical challenge that is presented by leisure as a research topic. Hartel suggests that serious leisure shows that leisure is both informational and an appropriate subject for study by the LIS community (Hartel 2003, p.3). Operating in conjunction with Information Literacy it would provide an iron-clad reason to view leisure as an indisputable site of information.

Undoubtedly, serious leisure addresses one of the key topics in today's educational, political and sociological landscapes. That is, how do people spend their leisure time? However, there is more to serious leisure than mere classification of those activities that occupy people's 'free' time. On the one hand it allows for an understanding of the way in which identity and lifestyle can be formed around an activity which is non-vocational, voluntary and, for the participant, more profound than any socially or fiscally dictated pursuit (Goffman 1963, p.135). On the other hand, and of key significance for this study,

is the simple fact that within every serious leisure activity resides a statement and articulation of the way in which an individual and/or group constitute and utilise information. Information is seen as being a source of empowerment for people and the key necessary to a mastery of the age in which we live (Andretta 2007). However, as the paucity of research documentation dealing with the way/s in which information is experienced, understood and constituted by serious leisure participants clearly indicates, despite the claims being made for the importance of information within today's society, it is not being thought of or actively enough studied in environments beyond the academic (Hartel 2003). Such a situation, naturally, undermines the entire conception of serious leisure, as well as the field of leisure studies and minimizes the undoubted potential of both.

2.6.5 Issues for Serious Leisure

Serious leisure is, essentially, a classification system. Under its auspices, leisure activities are grouped together based on the way in which they are pursued (casual, serious, project-based) and then again on the basis of how they are performed (in the case of serious leisure as either an amateur, hobbyist or career volunteer). However, given the fluidity and rapid, potentially irrational change that occurs within the realm of human endeavours, the imposition of structure may be problematic (Spurgin, 2008).

Those are not the issues raised by Spurgin (2008) whose concern lay with the failure to address the serious leisure participant's intent when classifying them as amateur, hobbyist or even as professional. Instead, apprehension lies with issues of bias and a Western,

capitalist masculine, hetero-normative aspect of the perspective (Raisborough, 1999. 2006; Parker, 2002; Kay, 2008; Pringle, Kay & Jenkins, 2011). Little to no work has been done to examine serious leisure in other cultures or non-Western ethnic groups. Subsequently, participants are required to fit within a specific viewpoint in order to be considered suitable for classification. If, due to their gender, ethnicity or other 'foreignness' they do not conform to the preconceived standards then they will be overlooked and the Perspective, as a whole, suffer for it.

It may also be found that due to cultural factors and pre-existing stereotypes, certain serious leisure outlets are heavily gendered (Bartram 2001; Rotolo and Wilson 2007). What that would mean, is that leisure cannot truly be considered 'uncoerced' activity as cultural coercion forces participants to engage primarily within certain leisure categories. In addition, when it comes to the classification of those leisure activities considered 'deviant', there is a distinct element of bias regarding what is and is not considered to be deviant. That is of particular concern in the treatment of non Judeo-Christian religions (such as Eastern religions), which, while being globally significant and prevalent are included in descriptions of deviant belief systems (Lawrence, 2014; Spurgin, 2008).

Stebbins, in one of his regular newsletters recognised that individual choice is 'anything but unfettered' ('Leisure Reflections 1, November 2002) and "culturally rooted preferences for certain leisure activities, acquired through primary and secondary socialization, steer so-called choice in subtle directions, often unbeknownst to the individual" (Leisure Reflections 2, March 2003). As a result, he has suggested doing

away with words such as ‘choice’ and ‘freely chosen’. In their place he has recommended using the term ‘uncoerced behaviour’ as a way of placing emphasis on the active individual having made a decision as to the way in which they will act. That there are restrictions on the ways in which they can utilise their leisure time is not important. All that does matter is the choice they do make within that world of restriction (Stebbins, 2002). While that certainly helps to steer researchers away from overlooking the impact external factors can have on an individual’s ability to choose a leisure outlet it doesn’t address the other concerns raised as to the classification system and the element of potential bias as outlined earlier.

Perhaps, when it comes to classification of those leisure practices which exist outside of the ‘academic majority’ (the Western driving forces behind the Serious Leisure Perspective) a detailed examination of the way in which participants experience using information will uncover something generalisable and cohesive which unites all participants regardless of their geographical, cultural or biological differences. Focusing on information literacy, such a study would provide a means by which non-workplace endeavours could be studied but with far greater depth than in afforded by ELIS. Whereas that approach looks at the mechanical, process-driven elements of information engagement (seeking and using), information literacy examines the experiential, relational union between the individual and information. Also, in terms of an ability to be applied to non-work contexts, information literacy offers far more flexibility than ELIS. Certainly, it has been examined in three different contexts - education, community and workplace. Given that serious leisure is spoken of as consisting of communities of

practitioners, the 'community' context would appear to be the most applicable of the three. However, while the workplace context might appear to be outside the bounds of serious leisure (work being a coerced activity and, therefore, the antithesis of leisure), the 'career' component within serious leisure activities does mean that the workplace context may indeed be of value to researchers. Of the three, it may be that the education context is the least applicable as it is, within information literacy, most typically confined to the experience of students within an academic setting. However, given the fluidity of serious leisure activities and its yet-to-be-fully-defined boundaries (Stebbins, 2010) that context cannot be dismissed altogether. Also, while all three of those contexts are distinct, if a serious leisure study was to occur within a situation in which two or all of the contexts were seen to be logically present then there would exist the possibility of combining all three or creating a new perspective which unites the three strands.

PART 2 – Information Literacy

2.7 Information Literacy

Seen as a cornerstone of today's information management, academic and educational environments (Batt 1998; Boekhorst 2003; Bundy 1999), information literacy is fast becoming recognised as the premier skill necessary for survival in the 21st century's 'Information Age' (Harding, 2011, p. 274). Although suffering from a high level of confusion regarding the actual meaning of the term (and application of the concept) and subject to much debate in its thirty-plus year history (Spitzer, Eisenberg & Lowe 1998, p.2) it would be fair to propose that 'information literacy' can be defined as: "an

understanding and set of abilities enabling individuals to 'recognise when information is needed and have the capacity to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. In a broader context, information literate people have been described as those who 'know when they need information and are then able to identify, locate, evaluate, organise and effectively use the information to address and help resolve personal, job related, or broader social issues and problems"(Bundy 2004, p.3).

Despite the debate surrounding its actual meaning and scope, there is no doubting information literacy's importance in twenty-first century society. Lifelong Learning, one of the buzzwords in today's educational landscape, demands that the importance of information literacy be recognised as a vital human resource and synthesised into the workaday life of all people (Karelse, 2000). Information literacy is seen as being a source of empowerment for people and the key necessary for a mastery of the digital world (Andretta, 2007). Not only does it provide a framework by which people can seek, utilise, evaluate and generate information in order to attain their social, professional, educational and personal goals (The Alexandria Proclamation, 2005) but scholars recognise it as being one of the key concerns of our times and the currency on which future economies will be built (Lepani, 1996). Indeed, since Zurkowski first used the term in 1974 (Zurkowski, 1974), information literacy has become one of the cornerstones of modern day education. That is, education in not only the tertiary or academic arena but across all sectors wherein the ability to recognise, access and evaluate information is of paramount importance.

Such a rise to prominence has not come unattended. Rather, it has coincided with the rapid advances made to those tools and technologies that are "used to generate, disseminate and access information" (Bruce, 1997, p.2). Indeed, such is information literacy's symbiotic dependence on and importance to the modern age, it has taken on Darwinian overtones wherein a person's continued ability to survive within a world driven/dominated by multifarious modes of communication and information exchange is becoming increasingly dependent on their information literacy skills. Therefore, information literacy's importance is not merely that it makes use of an opportunity (afforded by an information technology boom) but that it fills a need.

In addition, Kuhlthau (2004) and other researchers, notably Behrens (1992, 1994) and Bruce (1997) have made clear that if an individual is to fully develop their ability to create personal knowledge – an essential survival skill in what is commonly referred to as 'the information age'- they must first develop their information literacy skills. Indeed, the desire to develop personal skills, rather than abdicate them in favour of a controlling central authority (which brings to mind the traditional image of the 'reference desk') is very much connected to those changes that have taken place in the world's technological capabilities (Bruce, 1997) and in its societal norms. With available technology capable of housing data in previously unheard of quantities, more people in possession of the tools by which data can be both accessed and stored and with less people willing to allow someone else to provide them with the 'answers', information literacy rose to prominence. While it would be true to say that information literacy has always existed, in

some capacity, it was the convergence of technology, tools, accessibility, need and societal mores that made it indispensable.

2.8 The three spaces of Information Literacy: Workplace, Educational and Community contexts.

Since the beginnings of information literacy, in the early 1970's, there has been a gradual expansion in its research horizons and the contexts in which it is examined. Initially, research was confined to the educational sector (Bruce, 1997). However, as was the case with serious leisure (which originated at almost the same time), the more closely it was examined the more potential areas of engagement became apparent. In that period of development, dubbed the 'exploratory phase' by Bruce (2000), education, while still in the ascendency, was joined by the two other contexts as not only areas of consideration but also areas of detailed information literacy research (Lloyd & Williamson, 2008, p. 4). Despite that development; however, there still remains an unequal spread of research. Significant studies have been conducted within the area of workplace information literacy (Bruce, 1997, 1999, 2002; Rosenberg, 2002; Smith and Martina, 2004; Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2004; Boon, Johnston & Webber, 2007 and Lloyd, 2007). However, the research output still falls a long way short of that seen within the educational context (Bruce, 2000; Johnston & Webber, 2003, 2004; Edwards, Bruce & McAllister, 2004; Hughes, Middleton, Edwards, Bruce & McAllister, 2005; Partridge, Bruce and Tilley, 2008). Indeed, while it is, on one hand, considered to be an emerging research domain, considerable work still needs to be done in order to fully define its parameters (Lloyd &

Williamson, 2008). The same could also be said of information literacy within community settings, although that is more due to the overall lack of research that has been conducted (Lloyd and Williamson, 2008; Partridge, Bruce and Tilley, 2008). Of the three contexts it is the least well researched, understood and defined despite being, potentially, the most significant in regard to the population it impacts.

The research contained in this thesis connects to the information literacy contexts of both community and workplace. In that regard it can be considered a cross-contextual study wherein the research domain of leisure is addressed by two of the three information literacy contexts. An argument could be made that it does in fact address all three contexts. However, at this point only its connection to the workplace and community contexts will be examined. Equally, an argument could be made for leisure occupying a position as a new and wholly distinct context of information literacy research. However, that will not be pursued at this point in time. Subsequently, a more detailed explanation of the community and workplace contexts as well as an explanation of how this research aligns itself with them is as follows:

2.9 Information Literacy: workplace context

As one of the new contexts to emerge when, in its 'exploratory' phase (Bruce, 2000), IL research broadened its horizons and began to investigate sites of activity outside of the dominant educational context, workplace information literacy has been the focus of a number of recent studies. Cheuk (2002), Lloyd (2007, 2010, 2013), Hughes et al (2005) and Lloyd & Williamson (2008) have all addressed the issue of workplace information

literacy with varying degrees of complexity and with different concerns for the way in which it is applied. One of the major concerns to emerge from those studies is that generalisations made from research conducted in the educational sector and then applied to the workplace do not take into account the significant differences, in terms of experience and use of information, which occurs in that context (Lloyd and Williamson, 2008). That incompatibility also includes failure to make allowance for the varied nature of work, "where there are different emphases on the types of learning which occur, as well as on what constitutes information and knowledge, and on what process and practices are considered legitimate" (Lloyd and Williamson, 2008, p.5).

According to studies that have dealt with workplace IL, the skillset and education that dominates a particular work environment will depend on the education levels of the personnel. In those instances where the staff is predominantly tertiary-educated, information literacy will be most closely related to a text-based or ICT related skill set as well as to education provided by specialist librarians. However, where the workplace is primarily vocational in nature, the relationship with information literacy leans more towards the acquisition of skills that will positively impact on employability and/or proficiency (Lloyd and Williamson, 2008). That variation is indicative of the diverse and complex nature of workplace information literacy. Indeed, Lloyd (2007) and Lloyd-Zantiotis (2004) have characterized that complexity as 'holistic, socio-cultural practice' requiring that an individual, in order to understand their 'world order' (its setting and practices), are able to experience information in a variety of different ways and through a number of different 'texts' (where a text is the site of any narrative whether it be physical, social or intuitive which informs, educates and instructs).

2.10 Information Literacy: community context

In IL's current phase, in which the research terrain is being mapped and re-evaluated, studies that focus on the context of 'everyday life' have been few and far between. Indeed, of the three currently recognised IL contexts - community, educational and workplace - community information literacy is the least well researched, examined or understood (Lloyd & Williamson, 2008; Partridge, Bruce and Tilley, 2008). While that may be unsurprising, given the relatively infant state of information literacy research (Bruce, 2002), it still represents a major gap in understandings of IL. Indeed, according to Hughes et al (2005), community information literacy has significant implications in the area of social justice and action while Williamson et al (2000) and Yates et al (2012) have illustrated its importance to the areas of community health and wellbeing. That should come as no surprise when one considers that a community, by its very definition, consists of a group of interacting persons united by common goals, shared traits, characteristics or mindset (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The community is built on information and, in turn, information literacy is the means by which community members can communicate, decode community specific information (spoken or tacit) as well as understand and establish their own place within the community boundaries (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). To that end, recent studies have acknowledged that if Information Literacy is to deliver on its full potential it cannot be viewed only as a 'textual practice' but must be understood as existing within other forms, notably as an 'oral practice' (Lloyd & Williamson, 2008).

2.11 Researching the space: studies in workplace and community information literacy contexts.

As has been mentioned, this study connects to the information literacy contexts of both community and workplace. Subsequently, it can be viewed as a cross-contextual study informed by the research previously undertaken in both the community and workplace fields. While it has also been mentioned that both of those contexts represent new areas of examination for IL researchers and, as such, have not been the focus of as many studies as the educational context, significant works have been produced. Those works, few in number though they might be, stand as predecessors to this research and, even if agreement is not reached on all of their hypotheses they provide a map, of their respective contexts, which this study follows closely.

Of the two contexts under review it is the workplace setting that is the most contentious. One of the key defining elements of serious leisure is that all activities which fit under its heading are unpaid and uncoerced. That would, on the face of things, appear to run counter to the definition of a workplace where remuneration is the motivating factor. Certainly, an argument can be made that certain workplaces – such as volunteer enterprises and certain co-operative spaces – consist of willing but unpaid labour and volunteers are a recognised avenue for engagement with serious leisure (Stebbins, 1992; Parker, 1992; Orr, 2006). However, that only applies to some serious leisure practitioners and in proposing that a particular IL context applies to the entire field of SL requires a more all-encompassing reason for its acceptance. That reason is 'career'. As has already

been mentioned, one of the defining elements of serious leisure is that it allows participants to develop a career, which revolves around and is defined by their serious leisure activity (Stebbins, 1996, 2007, 2009). That career (which is ethical, moral, interest-based) exists outside of traditional remunerative work roles and refers to the way in which a serious leisure participant follows a continuous path of "acquiring relevant skills and knowledge, and accumulating relevant experience" (Stebbins, 1992, p.3) in order to participate in and engage with their chosen activity or interest. Therefore, just as Stebbins addresses the term 'career' in a more fluid manner than is traditional, the notion of a 'workplace' will be approached with the same degree of fluidity in this study. If a person is able to engage in a career outside of the traditional work roles then, similarly, they can establish a workplace outside of the traditional work environment. Any space in which a person is able to develop (as opposed to express or display) their career will, therefore, be considered as a workplace.

Having established that the boundaries of the workplace do allow for the existence of serious leisure, workplace information literacy will, therefore, provide an ideal context through which to examine the relationship that exists between serious leisure and information literacy. Having come to prominence in the latter stages of the 1990's, workplace information literacy has been championed by researchers as "a significant part of the character of learning organisations as well as a key characteristic of the organisation's employees" (Bruce, 1999, p.33). That emphasis, on the learning organisation and the organisation's employees is not at odds with serious leisure's often-solitary participants (who may belong to part of a community but operate individually, often connected only by virtual means). On the contrary, the organisation can be seen as

both the serious leisure community to which a person belongs and the workspace in which they pursue their serious leisure activity. Therefore, workplace information literacy applies both to the individual and the serious leisure activity. That understanding also fits with Bruce's accenting the importance, in a workplace environment, of dealing with large amounts of information presented in various formats and at various levels of quality (Bruce, 2008). Again, for the serious leisure participant, information will be found in a variety of forms and they will be charged with working out which is most reliable and applicable all with the aim of advancing their 'career'.

Where workplace IL may seem at odds with serious leisure is in the cost-value element proposed by Macoustra (2004). However, it can be argued that a workplace which is "more efficient and cost-effective" (p.134) is equally important to a serious leisure participant as, in receiving no financial remuneration for their endeavours and, potentially, having to support their serious leisure enterprise with work in an unrelated field, they have an equal or greater need for efficiency as well as cost effectiveness. Those elements, of efficiency and effectiveness, were also addressed by Cheuk who stressed the importance of providing workers with access to the required information at the necessary time (Cheuk, 2002).

Interestingly, in one of the earliest studies of workplace information literacy, albeit written from the context of vocational education and training (Lloyd & Williamson, 2008), IL was advocated as a key competency and generic process in both training and learning (Burnheim, 1992). The contention being that it would enable an individual to critically reflect on and evaluate information within the context of their work (Lloyd &

Williamson, 2008). As has been outlined previously, *significant effort* is one of serious leisure's six key and defining elements. It deals with the gaining and developing of specialized knowledge, experience, training and skills which will allow a person to pursue their serious leisure activity at the career level (Arai, 2000; Gravelle & Larocque, 2005; Stebbins, 2006; Shen & Yarnal, 2010). Similarly, in the studies conducted by Gasteen and O'Sullivan (2000) which connected information literacy to organisational knowledge (Lloyd & Williamson, 2008), there is a direct connection to the element of *unique ethos* in which the serious leisure participant shares with others pursuing a similar activity, attitudes, beliefs, values, practices and goals (Stebbins, 2007).

While it is not necessary for a person to share the ideals and ethics of the company they work for, they will need to understand its mission, aim and 'language'. Without an understanding of those things, they cannot undertake their job or progress within the organisation. That approach was taken up by Rosenberg (2002) who outlined the need for workers to be able to understand the value of information as well as how to use and acquire information (Rosenberg, 2002) and was extended further by Smith and Martina (2004) by relating information literacy to employability. While serious leisure participants are not driven by employability they are motivated by acceptance within their leisure community. In that regard, the two elements can be seen to address the same issue, namely the ability to enter into a 'career space' whether it be the professional world of the worker or the community world of the serious leisure participant.

That degree of applicability and fusion, between workplace information literacy and serious leisure, can be found in Lloyd's (2004, 2007, 2013) studies of workplace IL. She

proposed that information literacy constitutes a "complex and holistic socio-cultural practice, which requires a person to experience information in a range of different ways in order to know the setting and its practices" (Lloyd and Williamson, 2008, p.6). That being the case, she posited the question as to whether or not workplace information literacy skills were transferable from one work environment to another (Lloyd, 2003, 2004). Within the context of serious leisure the answer to that question may well be 'yes' and 'no'. While certain aptitudes and competencies would be considered as applying to multiple SL activities and where the same criteria (as outlined previously) applies to all avenues of SL engagement, it cannot be said that all skills taught in one context would transfer to another (Lloyd, 2003,2004). Lloyd's contention that there are social and physical experiences of information allows for the diverse range of serious leisure activities requiring a variety of unique physical and/or mental skills and dexterities. Therefore, the workplace information literacy context she and other researchers propose is eminently suited to an examination of serious leisure and serious leisure practitioners.

Similarly, the context of community information literacy is of great interest to serious leisure research. However, unlike the workplace context, there is nothing outwardly contentious about that connection. Leisure, it would appear, forms part of the community space. To date; however, studies dealing with information literacy in the community context are rare, a situation attributed to the relative infancy of the IL discipline (Partridge, Bruce and Tilley, 2008). Regardless, a sizeable body of work, dealing with the information-seeking behaviours of community groups, has been conducted (Lloyd and Williamson, 2008) and it has been suggested that the data obtained in those studies can be

applied to the IL domain. Subsequently, some conclusions may be drawn as to the IL needs of those community groups (Lloyd and Williamson, 2008). Of the studies that have taken that approach, the work conducted by Williamson (1995, 1996, 1997, 2009), which dealt with the information seeking behaviour of adults aged 60+ (classed as representatives of the 'Fourth Age') and Asla (2006), which investigated the role of information in successful ageing, are of particular interest. They both contended that information literacy is an ongoing concern for people irrespective of age or infirmity; however, it (information literacy) presents itself in a different fashion from other contexts (Lloyd and Williamson, 2008). That is, people within those contexts rather than gather information purposefully do so parenthetically - in a fashion wherein information is obtained through contact with a network of health-related organisations and activities.

Also of significance to the community IL space is the study, by Yates, Partridge and Bruce (2012), which explores how ageing Australians use information to learn about their health. Dubbed 'health information literacy' it falls within the community information literacy context and provides another example of community IL revolving around a personal need (health) but not personal fulfillment (leisure). That community sphere has also generated studies (characterized as being within the context of everyday life) dealing with the information behaviour of church communities (Gunton, Bruce, Stoodley, 2012), battered women (Dunne 2002); women (Young 2002); older adults (Wicks 2004); homeless people (Gale 1998); and African Americans (Spink & Cole 2001). It can be suggested that a theme unifying all of those studies is their focus on a part of everyday life that exists in the personal, communal space of the community but is outside the

personal, private life of the individual. Subsequently, they constitute community and, therefore, community information literacy, as belonging to the group and not to the individual, which is a salient point when considering the contextual space (in regard to information literacy) into which serious leisure would fit.

That point is raised again by Hargittai and Hinnant's (2006) 'small world' theory. In discussing studies that have examined Internet use within the context of everyday information seeking they posited that a defining characteristic is the focus on the milieu or 'small worlds' of the groups under examination. They contend that a 'small world' is "a society or world in which members share a common worldview…Members [of the small world] determine what is, and what is not, important, and which sources can be trusted" (Hersberger, 2005, p.80 in Partridge, Bruce and Tilley, 2008, p.112). While that certainly matches aspects of serious leisure the strict focus on membership of a group is at odds with those serious leisure activities that are engaged with outside the bounds of a communal setting. Indeed, many serious leisure participants, while they can be seen as part of a larger group based on a shared area of interest, do not have any contact with other serious leisure participants (Stebbins, 2007). Their engagement with an activity is solitary and personal although no less gratifying for the lack of connection to a like-minded collective.

It can also be said that workplace information literacy and educational information literacy (the two other currently recognised information literacy contexts) also fall under the domain of personal need. Leisure, on the other hand, falls into the category of personal fulfillment. Garner (2005) says that there are four distinct areas into which

people's goals fall. They are educational, occupational, social and personal. The first three match up perfectly with the information literacy contexts of education, workplace and community. However, the final category is missing. If we were to acknowledge that leisure, which represents an outlet for unmediated desire, as opposed to the other contexts which are representative of need, then we would have a clear focus for each of those areas. Currently, leisure is most probably linked to community information literacy. However, it and serious leisure are distinct enough (illustrated by leisure studies and serious leisure being unique fields of research in their own right) to be examined outside of the umbrella heading of 'community' or 'everyday life'.

2.12 Three theoretical perspectives on information literacy

One of the defining characteristics of information literacy is the lack of universal agreement regarding the way in which it should be defined and conceptually approached. Subsequently, there is not one but three perspectives – behavioural, socio-cultural and relational - which guides all current IL research.

2.12.1 Behavioural Perspective

To date, the behavioural perspective has been the predominant method by which to approach information literacy scholarship and teaching. It sees information literacy as being comprised of certain elements that an individual must learn, understand, acquire and display if they are to be considered as 'information literate' (Bruce, 1997). Its focus on specific aptitudes as the hallmarks of information literacy is exemplified by Doyle's

statement that information literary is the "ability to access, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources" (Doyle, 1992, p.2). Given that Doyle's definition arose as part of an American national forum on information literacy it is not surprising that it has seemingly been adopted as the standarised definition of information literacy by academics, researchers and educators within that particular region. In providing a mechanical, structured, process-driven definition of information literacy, Doyle gave primacy to only its observable, almost qualitative elements. As a result, information literacy was seen as something that existed only within quantifiable terms and, more importantly, information literacy programmes could be structured and measured. In addition, Doyle established a structured list of skill and competency based outcomes which would be expected of an information literate person and, therefore, of an information literacy programme (Doyle, 1992).

When information literacy is examined or understood by way of the behavioural approach, a heavy focus is placed on information sources (Sundin, 2008) and IL is subsequently constituted as a set of skills and competencies. The primary aim of the behavioural approach is to provide, for the participant, a blueprint they can follow as to how information seeking should be undertaken. The participant can then utilise that blueprint to guide their future information seeking activities (Sundin, 2008). That method of dealing with information literacy is close in nature to Kuhlthau's (1987) 'pathfinder approach' and Tucket & Stoffle's (1984) 'conceptual framework approach' (Sundin, 2008) in that it provides a structured means by which to engage with part of the information agenda. It could also be called a tactical approach in that it sees information as both the answer to a question and the apparatus by which a question is answered.

Information literacy is, therefore, constituted as a mechanical, regimented process leading people to behave in 'appropriate' ways in order to "identify, through whatever channel or medium, information well fitted to information needs" (Johnston and Webber, 2004, p.13).

2.12.1.1 Limitations of the Behavioural Perspective

It is precisely the behavioural perspective focus on a process-driven and outcome based definition of Information Literacy, which proves to be its key limitation. In constituting information literacy as a process it constitutes a complex structure into a neat, 'one-size-fits-all' package that is marketable to industry but not commensurate with the experiences of a human population (Webber and Johnston, 2000). It focuses only on those aspects of information literacy that pertain to information seeking, utilization of information tools, information based actions and other elements which are more observable than is possible with experiential approaches to information literacy. As a result, there is a limit to the way in which the behavioural perspective is able to constitute information literacy and, therefore, a limit to what it is able to accommodate within its conceptual framework as being part of the information literacy agenda. In addition, the behavioural perspective privileges a neat, structured and ordered approach to information literacy whereas that type of information environment is not always feasible, sustainable or indeed applicable to the multitude of ways in which people experience information (Lloyd & Williamson, 2008). As Bruce (2008) suggests, the current information age which is synonymous with rapid change in information tools, technology and skills, makes it likely that any information literacy perspective which focuses only on skills and aptitudes is liable to be

made redundant as new technologies surpass old ones and new ways of thinking about information are required (Bruce, 2008).

Another problem with the behavioural perspective is that it has imagined information literacy within a limited environment and, as such, doesn't account for variable information environments. According to Campbell (2008) a chief way in which the behavioural perspective has done that is by reducing information literacy to a concept that occurs only within educational or library sciences environments. While it certainly does occur in those situations they don't account for the vast range of possible settings in which information literacy can be engaged with or evidenced. To that end, the behavioural perspective does not constitute IL as something that is adaptive or flexible. Rather, it is seen as something that can be isolated and reduced to a perpetual formula. However, that lack of fluidity and dynamism means that, as envisioned by the behavioural perspective, information literacy is something that can ultimately be made redundant because it was incapable of adapting to change.

2.12.2 Sociocultural Perspective

Another approach that has gained currency within the IL research community is the sociocultural perspective. Within that viewpoint, information literacy is seen a "complex and holistic socio-cultural practice, which requires a person to experience information in a range of different ways in order to know the setting and its practices" (Lloyd & Williamson, 2008, p.6). Indeed, according to researchers who adopt the socio-cultural perspective (including Tuominen, Savolainen, & Talja, 2005; Sundin, Limberg & Talja,

2012), IL is more than merely a theoretical or mechanical application but, rather, occurs at the physical and societal level (Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2004; Lloyd, 2007). In turn, that interconnectedness of the social and the individual is implicit in the construction of knowledge (Wang, 2011). Lloyd (2007) contends that previous IL studies have followed a 'Cartesian' system wherein the mind and body are seen as two disparate entities and 'mentalistic' approaches to IL are privileged at the expense of a framework which recognises the "complex sociocultural and embodied nature of information environments" (Lloyd, 2007, p. 1). Similarly, according to the sociocultural theorists, an information environment cannot be fully understood without understanding and acknowledging the interconnectedness which exists between physical, social and cognitive information (Lloyd, 2007).

2.12.2.1 Limitations of the Sociocultural Perspective

Where the sociocultural perspective is limited is in its ability to account for the IL experience or even IL behaviour of the individual. That is most especially the case in regard to the individual's experience of IL outside of the formal structures of society and culture. Therefore, the individual's potential for truly individual experience is not commensurate with a sociocultural perspective in which society has primacy over the individual and their ability to experience phenomena in a way not determined by their cultural, social and organisational upbringing (Matusov, Hayes, 2000). The interconnectedness and interdependence that Wang (2011) mentions is constructed within a teacher-student relationship in which the individual takes on the role of student and the society, culture or organisation adopts the position of teacher and arbiter of information

and knowledge.

2.12.3 Relational perspective

The relational approach (or frame), which is the method utilised in this study, was pioneered by Bruce (1997) and realized in her work, 'The Seven Faces of Information Literacy'. According to the relational approach, information literacy is constituted as the ability to effectively use information in a variety of different ways and in different levels of complexity (Bruce, 1997). That approach has been adopted by a number of researchers and used primarily within the educational and workplace contexts. Limberg (2000), Edwards (2005) and Lupton (2008) have all produced work using the relational approach to examine an educational context while McMahon & Bruce (2002), Kirk (2002) and Boon, Johnston and Webber (2007) have utilised it in their workplace-based research. It has not been used widely within the community context; however, given the paucity of research (of any type) to be conducted within that arena, a shortfall is unsurprising. The most noteworthy exception is the recent study by Yates, Partridge and Bruce (2012), dealing with the information literacy experience of older Australians searching for health-related information, which was conducted within a community context.

Despite information literacy's rise to prominence within the library and information science (LIS) community, some researchers have expressed concern at the ways in which the concept is understood and applied (Bruce 2008). One opinion is that a primary cause of confusion arises from the term, 'information literacy', being "understood, in some circles, as being about the acquisition of technological skills, library skills and

information skills (behavioural) while elsewhere they are used to refer to the experience of using information as we go about learning (relational)" (Bruce 2008) and sociocultural. It would appear that, in many instances, it is the behavioural 'skills element' which both dominates and limits people's thinking regarding IL. Indeed, "many people use the term information literacy synonymously with every concept in the information literacy agenda – 'information skills', 'information use', 'information literacy', 'information literacy education' " (Bruce 2008, p.4). However, the reality is that each of those terms should be acknowledged as unique concepts. Due to that tendency, distinct and significant elements of the information literacy agenda are not given their full due and, subsequently, the overall strength of IL is weakened by the homogenous way in which it is being applied and the way it is expressed within the language of LIS. In being applied as a generalization it loses the power to speak for its individual, conceptually distinct constituent elements.

As a means by which to counter that tendency, of using 'information literacy' as an indistinct 'umbrella' phrase, to separate out the relational concept from behavioural and sociocultural definitions of IL and in the belief that information literacy is, essentially, about using information in order to learn, Bruce (2008) proposed the concept of informed learning. To achieve that aim, Bruce adapted her 'Six Frames for Information Literacy' (Bruce, Edwards & Lupton, 2006) and 'The Seven Faces of Information Literacy' (Bruce, 1997) as a means by which to facilitate Informed Learning's growth as a significant but distinct part of the information literacy agenda. In both cases the re-working has been brought about in order to address Bruce's contention that "information

literacy is fundamentally about using information to learn" (Bruce 1997, p.59). While information literacy is seen as "a complex of different ways of using information to learn" (Bruce 2008, p.5), informed learning "brings learner-centered, experiential, and reflective approaches to the information literacy agenda. Informed learning provides the language and organizing concept that allows us to focus on understanding and improving student's use of information as they learn" (Bruce 2008, p.5).

The benefit of that learner-centric approach is that, to date, the majority of focus on information literacy has been on areas such as skills-based instruction, protocols and standards (Bruce 2010) while little attempt has been made to examine the ways and means through which students/learners engage with information (Bruce, Hughes, Somerville 2010). In that regard, the cart has been placed well before the horse. Without a solid understanding of the information experience all learners will undertake and the outcomes of that experience, information literacy programmes are being created with little to no "acknowledgement of the diverse contexts in which information literacy might be enacted" (Bruce, Hughes, Somerville 2010). The dominant view is one of functionality rather than inclusiveness. Subsequently, when information literacy is thought of it is through the lens of skills acquisition/education or skills utilization. What needs to happen is for it to open itself up to a view that incorporates the experience of using information in order to learn. Informed Learning presents itself as the ideal next step. Intimately connected to Information Literacy yet, due to its only seeking to address one part of the information agenda, free of the confusion that limits much information literacy discussion, it does represent the logical way forward.

2.13 The Research Gap

Information, as it is experienced and understood by serious leisure participants, has, to date, been an underdeveloped topic within that body of research devoted to the area of serious leisure. Emphasis has been placed, almost exclusively, on establishing the validity of the Serious Leisure concept and uncovering the existence of areas that can be deemed to fall under its banner. Having shown that it is, indeed, a legitimate and quantifiable phenomenon, subsequent work has only sought to examine the areas in which participants can be found and how their serious leisure activity enables them to construct an identity around that activity and the social world of it. Orr's (2006) examination of 'heritage as serious leisure' is a step forward but typical of the available material in that it only attempts to establish the validity of a particular area as a site of serious leisure. However, that one paper aside, there is an overwhelming absence of research documentation dealing with the way in which its (serious leisure) participants constitute information. Resultantly, the ways in which information – the cornerstone and currency of all serious leisure activities- is experienced and understood by serious leisure participants has not been fully addressed. Attempts made utilising Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) have fallen short due to that construct focussing on only one aspect of the information experience and its adherence to a system of a priori knowledge wherein experience is ignored in favour of what it seen to be empirical evidence and devices for the accumulation of empirical data ('seeking'). Without asking how people experience information ELIS doesn't engage with an integral step in the information agenda. This study aims to redress that gap in research In so doing it represents the first

resource to explore the variation that exists in regard to the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity.

While this study has a specific Library and Information Sciences (LIS) focus it links to and certain works previously undertaken within the area of serious leisure. However, where it differs, in particular from the work of Lee & Trace (2008) is, firstly, in its examination of collective experiences across the field of Serious Leisure rather than those found within a singular communal setting (their focus having been on one group only and then extrapolating from that to speak across the field of serious leisure) secondly, in its focus on the area of 'heritage' as a site of Serious Leisure activity (their focus having been on collectors) and, thirdly, in its use of an Australian setting and subjects. While each study may strive for universal truths it is a large step forward, for the Australian LIS industry, to look for those realities within a local backdrop. Also, while the Lee & Trace study dealt with participants who considered the primary role of information to revolve around 'acquiring objects' (Lee & Trace 2009, p. 634), this study examines the lived experience of participants who consider information to be an acquisition in and of itself.

2.14 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the currently available literature dealing with the areas of serious leisure and information literacy. In doing so it has highlighted the gaps that exist in serious leisure research as well as showing the trends and historical standards that have driven study within the serious leisure field. In addition is has provided a summary of serious leisure as an area of interest and has detailed the components of which it is

comprised. In describing those elements discussion has also been included regarding the way in which this study differs from previous works. It also looked at how those prior studies had attempted to examine serious leisure and what that means for future research, such as this thesis. This chapter also included an overview of information literacy, what it is and how it has been applied as well as a discussion regarding the current and historical state of research into the field. That discussion was also used to place this study within its appropriate information literacy context and to show how the work being undertaken here can impact upon what is already known about the field of information literacy. The chapter concludes with an examination of the gap that exists within current research, in regard to both serious leisure and information literacy and indicates where this study will both fill a gap and be positioned in relation to previous works.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology employed in undertaking this study. It begins by providing an explanation of the choices which need to be made when selecting a research methodology and the rationale which dictated that the one selected for this study, phenomenography, was the most appropriate. It then describes in detail that research methodology its ontology and key features. The aim of that description being to make clear the way in which a phenomenographic study is undertaken, the advantages it has over other research methodologies and the criticisms that have been levelled at it. The chapter also provides an explication of data analysis and research design as they are conducted and constructed within a phenomenographic study. It ends with an outline of the ethical clearance parameters, budgetary concerns for the research project and the anticipated timeline for completion of the study.

The aim of this study has been to explore variation in regard to the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity (within the area of 'heritage'). As a result it was necessary to find a research methodology that would allow for an in-depth focus on the experiential, the human and the interpretivist all of which occur with real people within a real-world setting. Given those parameters, the qualitative paradigm, which assists us in understanding a phenomenon from the perspective of those participants engaged with it, was deemed to be the most suitable and appropriate.

3.2 Research Paradigm

This project adopts the research paradigms of constructionism and interpretivism. Constructionism forms the epistemological orientation while interpretivism is the theoretical perspective (Crotty, 1998). Both operate as concepts which inform the researcher's outlook and guide them in a particular direction vis a vis their research orientation by sharing "the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1994, p.118).

Within a constructionist epistemology, "meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (Crotty, 1998, p.43). Resultantly, knowledge, which consists of truth and meaning, is pieced together via the interplay between socialization and social interaction. For the constructionist, people are always at the heart of meaning even if, across different cultures, those meanings are constructed differently even when addressing similar phenomena (Crotty, 1998, p.9). However, despite being constructed by people, meaning is not merely 'conjured up and imposed' on phenomena. On the contrary, in constructing meaning we do so from the understanding that materials or a platform already exist upon which construction can take place (Crotty, 1998). Similarly, interpretivism "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998), p.67) and provides a means by which to understand human thoughts (Pickard, 2007). Within an interpretivist perspective knowledge, truth and meaning are constructed by way of a person's lived experiences and are indivisible from the individual (Sandberg, 2005).

When selecting a research methodology it is imperative to find one that can reflect reality as seen through the eyes of the research subjects. Phenomenography, which explores variation in the way people "experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them" (Marton, 1986, p. 31), provides the means by which that may be achieved.

3.3 Rationale for selection of phenomenography as research methodology

Given that the aim of this study is to explore variation in regard to the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity (within the area of 'heritage') it was necessary to find a research methodology that would allow for an in-depth focus on the experiential, the human and the interpretivist all of which occur with real people within a real-world setting. With those parameters in mind, and given its suitability for "describing conceptions of the world around us" (Marton, 1994, p.428) as well as dealing with qualitatively different states of experience, understanding and conception - phenomenography was deemed to be the most appropriate research methodology. Indeed, Library and Information Science (LIS) research, which is what this study falls under, deals with the perceptual experience and attitudes of those people who use information and information technology and, given that phenomenography's key interest is the exploration of variation in the way people "experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them" (Marton, 1986, p. 31), they are a most appropriate match (Bruce, 1999). That potential,

for understanding the different experiences of those people who operate within the LIS domain, could "potentially influence the design of systems, training and education of end-users and professionals and evaluation strategies. Designers, educators and evaluators would be positioned to consider and take into account identified variation in experience" (Bruce, 1999, p. 32). It would also provide a means by which to understand the ways in which people view LIS and its attendant principles and practices as well as the ways in which people experience and understand information.

Despite there being a number of different methodological approaches, such as case studies, content analysis and grounded theory (Trigwell, 2000a), that could have been utilized in order to carry out the study, phenomenography stood out as being the most appropriate for the purpose of this study. The key components of this study are experience and variation. That is, the way in which people experience a particular phenomenon and the variation that exists between one person's experience and that of another. While the research being conducted aims to understand the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity, there has been no desire, stated or otherwise, to produce one finite answer or to expect that one exists. Subsequently, difference and variation are integral parts of the research findings. That being the case phenomenography, which describes "the qualitatively different ways of experiencing various phenomena" (Pang, 2003, p.135) was deemed to be the most appropriate choice for the research project. Unlike other methodologies that are driven by either theory, the researcher him/herself or a combination of the two, phenomenography provides a research avenue that is more conducive to eliciting findings based on the experience,

views and nature of the subjects themselves (Akerlind 2005). Subsequently, it presents itself as the most suitable choice of methodology for this study.

The aim of this research project has been to explore variation in regard to the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity (within the area of 'heritage'). Principle in that statement is the word 'experience'. Given that phenomenography concerns itself with the way/s in which people experience phenomena, it presents itself as the most likely of candidates. That belief is confirmed by knowledge that in most of the other studies dealing with the idea of using information to learn including the key works in that domain (Bruce, Buckingham, Hynd, McMahon, Roggenkamp & Stoodley, 2004; Boon, Johnston, & Webber, 2007; Bruce, 2008; Bruce, Stoodley & Pham, 2009; Bruce & Hughes, 2010; Partridge, Edwards & Thorpe, 2010; Yates, Partridge, Bruce & Edwards, 2012), it has been the research methodology of choice. Indeed, phenomenography is "a way of – an approach to- identifying, formulating, and tackling certain sorts of research questions" (Marton 1997, p.111), in particular questions which focus on issues of experience, such as the one posed by this study.

A phenomenographic study generates results that are applicable to a collective, not to an individual or individuals. While a variety of different experiences are uncovered there is no attempt made to create a separate dialogue for each person. Instead, the responses unite together to form a collective voice that enables researchers to map the full range and scope of variation as it exists for a particular phenomenon. Indeed, in terms of this

project's central focus – the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity (within the area of 'heritage') -. it is phenomenography's capacity to provide "a way of looking at collective human experience of phenomena holistically despite the fact that such phenomena may be perceived differently by different people and under different circumstances" (Akerlind, 2005, p.72), which is of most significance. That approach differs from the one typically adopted within behavioural sciences wherein results are derived from the experience of an independent observer. Phenomenography focuses on the subjects' experience of varying aspects of the world (Marton, 1981) that allows statements to be made about collective experiences rather than individual ones.

3.4 Phenomenography: an overview

3.4.1 Methodology

Phenomenography provides a way in which to uncover and map "the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them" (Marton & Booth, 1997). Concerning itself with uncovering and charting the finite number of ways in which a phenomenon is experienced (Edwards, 2007, p.88), as well as illustrating the ways in which the different ways of experiencing are interrelated, it can also be utilised as a means of examining approaches to learning and teaching (Bowden & Walsh, 2000; Bruce, Stoodley & Pham, 2009). In typical phenomenographic research, the object of study is "variation in human meaning, understanding, conceptions or, more recently, awareness or ways of experiencing a particular phenomenon" (Akerlind, 2007. P.322).

Subsequently phenomenography, as a research methodology, provides the means by which a researcher can understand, qualitatively, how people constitute their social environment through their interactions with various phenomena. It is also the means by which researchers can explore and map and understand human experiential awareness.

At the heart of phenomenography "lies an interest in describing the phenomena in the world as others see them, and in revealing and describing the variation therein, especially in an educational context" (Marton 1997, p.111). Bruce (1997) describes that divergence as "variation in conception" (Bruce 1997, p. 83) and it equates to the range of experiential responses that are generated by people in relation to a particular phenomenon (Bowden, 2005; Partridge, Edwards and Thorpe 2010). While there are only "a limited number of qualitatively different ways in which a phenomenon can be experienced" (Marton 1997, p.112) that does not mean learning is a static concern. On the contrary, what it does mean is that, collectively, when people experience a particular phenomenon they will do so in one of only a certain number of ways. However, the process whereby the phenomenon is 'reinvented' in the eyes of the learner will continue. That is, a "way of experiencing something is a way of discerning something from, and relation it to, a context. The meaning of something for someone at a particular point in time corresponds to the pattern of parts or aspects that are discerned and are simultaneously objects of focal awareness" (Marton 1997, p.112). To discern or be focally aware of something means that an element or a possibility of the phenomenon becomes apparent to the learner visually or conceptually. Until those aspects are discerned the phenomenon will be experienced in a way that is informed by their absence. That is, the experience will be

reliant on and informed by only those elements, aspects, possibilities and truths that are immediately apparent to the learner.

Phenomenography has been utilised by a number of disciplines, in areas as diverse as mathematics, psychology, religious studies, health, business and management as well as within a number of Library and Information Science (LIS) studies. In an Australian context, two of the key uses have been in education – higher education in particular- and within the information technology discipline. In the latter setting, the studies which have been conducted have followed three "established lines of phenomenographic research: 1) the study of conceptions of learning, 2) the study of conceptions in specific disciplines of study and 3) the study of how people conceive of various aspects of their everyday world that have not, for them, been the object of formal studies" (Bruce 2002, p.1). In the former and most significant setting, within the realm of education, it has been used as a way of understanding the qualitatively different ways in which students understand and make sense of various aspects of their educational environment (Asplund, Marton & Halász, 1993; Smith & Hepworth, 2012), as well as individual concepts within the school or university curriculum (Lybeck, Marton, Strömdahl & Tullberg, 1988).

Within the LIS arena, phenomenography has been undertaken as the research methodology for studies exploring the information literacy awareness of public librarians (Demasson, 2010), students perceptions regarding information searching (Edwards and Bruce, 2002) and experiences of information literacy (Lupton, 2004), information literacy education and awareness (Bruce, 1997; Bruce, 1999; McMahon and Bruce, 2002; Boon,

Johnston & Webber, 2007) and library practitioner's experience and conception of evidence based library and information practice (Partridge, Edwards & Thorpe, 2010) . In regard to this study, it is expected that a contribution will be made, not only to the body of knowledge which exists surrounding its key concepts – serious leisure, information literacy and phenomenography – but also to the possible ways in which systems, training and education of LIS end-users will be formulated and performed.

3.4.2 Types of Phenomenography

Bowden (2000) refers to two distinct types of phenomenography, 'developmental' and 'pure'. According to him, 'pure' phenomenography as practiced by researchers such as Marton, details "how people conceive of various aspects of their reality, where the concepts under study are mostly phenomena confronted by subjects in everyday life rather than course material" (Bowden 2000, p.3). Developmental phenomenography, on the other hand, he sees as being placed into a context determined by the way in which people "experience some aspect of their world, and then to enable them or others to change the way in which their world operates" (Bowden 2000, p.3). In his delineation between types of phenomenography Bowden is influenced by the works of Saljo (1994) who believed that the phenomenography of Marton failed to take into account people's interpretative capabilities and their capacity for making sense of visual and aural stimuli. People exist within a semiotic world filled with signs and signifiers that they must interpret in order to exist within their social world. Interpretation of those signs and signifiers is determined not only by their innate humanity (the assumption being that

there is a shared human experience which crosses all cultural boundaries) but also by their existence within a particular social and cultural world.

Despite those concerns regarding phenomenography's ability to account for people's hermeneutic capabilities, it is agreed that in its presumption of unity between subject and object and presentation of findings by way of data rather than theory, phenomenography exists as a non-dualist, empirical and qualitative research approach. That means, in being empirical, it acquires information by way of observation or experimentation and in its qualitative approach to research it focuses on the questions of 'how' and 'why' (in this study the emphasis is on the question of 'how do people experience a particular phenomenon). In regard to its non-dualism, Marton states that the chief characteristic of phenomenography is in how it views the relationship between the person and some particular phenomenon within their world. That relationship commonly referred to as 'conceptions', as well being the distinguishing feature of phenomenography and phenomenographers such as Svensson (1994,1997) and Marton (1981; 1986; 1992; 1994; 1997; 2000).

3.4.3 Phenomenographic Ontology

It is typically said that in phenomenography there is a divide between epistemological and ontological assumptions and the empirical research tradition (Svensson 1997). Indeed, the belief is that, as it is not derived from a series of philosophical rules and traditions, it is that empirical research tradition which precedes any metaphysical beliefs and ideas (Svensson 1997). A basic assumption made by phenomenographers is that, in

terms of ontology, the world of the learner is constructed by the learner and not imposed on or provided for them by some external agent (Bowden, 2005; Marton & Booth, 1997). That non-dualist conception of the nature of reality posits "there is only one world, but it is a world that we experience, a world we live in" (Marton & Booth, 1997, p.13). Subsequently, reality is part of an ongoing process of interpretation and 'meaning-making' generated through experience.

Most significantly, in regard to this study, is the belief that "social reality is a product of meaningful interactions as perceived from the perspectives of those involved, and not from the perspectives of the observer" (Ireland, Tambyah, Neofa & Harding, 2009, p.4). That constructivist view of ontology argues that reality is both constituted and interpreted by individuals as they experience various phenomena situated within time, place and context. Indeed, from the constructionist perspective, knowledge or truth or reality are dependent on social practices "being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998, p.42).

The subject and the object share a distinct relationship wherein "experience is constituted between person and world, reflecting both" (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 164). That is to say, the individual creates the world, which in turn makes them the world of their creation. Marton provides a clear explanation of the phenomenographic position when he says that "there are not two worlds: a real world, objective world on the one hand, and a subjective world of mental representation on the other. There is only one world, a really

existing human world, which is expressed and understood in different ways by human beings. It is simultaneously objective and subjective. An experience is a relationship between objects and subjects encompassing both. The experience is as much an aspect of the object as it is of the subject" (Marton, 2000, p.105).

In that regard, experience takes primacy for the phenomenographer and provides the means by which he or she will examine all phenomena. Experience is the result of any relationship regardless of whether that relationship is between an animate and inanimate entity. The ontological question as to the existence of reality, dealt with by theories such as materialism and idealism (Svensson, 1997), is not considered to be problematic as, for the phenomenographers, there is an assumption that the world exists and, therefore, can be spoken about as something which is experienced (Marton, 1981). Not possessing an "articulated metaphysical foundation" (Svensson, 1997, p.165) phenomenography makes instead certain base assumptions regarding the nature of its objects of study. Those assumptions typically focus on the nature and/or character of the object or phenomenon under study and deal most specifically with conceptions that are inextricably linked to assumptions made regarding the nature of knowledge and thinking (Svensson, 1997). In that relationship between knowledge and thinking the assumptions are made that, while knowledge is based on thought and emerges out of the union between thought and activity, it is also "dependent upon the world or reality external to the individual and external to human activity and thinking" (Svensson, 1997, p.165). Therefore conceptions, which depend on both the world external to the individual as well as to human activity, and knowledge, have a relational nature (Svensson, 1997).

3.4.4 Phenomenographic Epistemology

Whereas ontology deals with the nature of reality, epistemology deals with how that reality is known. Unlike a positivist epistemology which would hold that the object of study exists independent of those people involved in researching it and, therefore, can be examined through direct observation of the phenomena themselves, interpretivist epistemology contends that knowledge is formed through the intertwining of social functions and interaction (Silverman, 2000). As a result of those processes and the resultant stimuli generated by them, people create meanings (Burns, 2000). One way of understanding that, as well as the phenomenographic perspective, is through variation. According to Marton (1996), "individuals are seen as the bearers of different ways of experiencing various phenomena, and even as the bearers of fragments of differing ways of experiencing various phenomena" (Marton, 1996, p.187). Subsequently, the principal assumption of phenomenography is that there are a finite variety of ways in which any one phenomenon can be experienced and abstracted.

Those ontological and epistemological concerns inform and guide the development of any phenomenographic study. Focusing, not on the way in which the researcher interprets the phenomenon in question but, rather, on the manner in which the subjects of the study experience it, the researcher must, subsequently, adopt a second-order perspective as a means by which to fully examine the relationship of subject to object.

3.4.5 Second-order Perspective

In a first-order perspective the researcher provides a description of the way in which they understand or interpret particular phenomena. However, in a second-order approach, the focus of the research is on the experience of a particular phenomenon or phenomena, as others define it or them. Indeed, "phenomenographers do not claim to study 'what is there' in the world (reality) but they do claim to study 'what is there' in people's conceptions of the world" (Webb, 1997, pp.199-200). Given that the aim of phenomenography is to identify the finite number of ways in which a phenomenon can be experienced, the second-order perspective is an ideal fit. In order to identify those experiences, a lens other than that of the researcher must be applied (Marton, 1981) and that is what the second-order perspective does.

Within a phenomenographic study, the second-order perspective operates in two ways. Firstly it guides the interviews by directing the interviewer's attention to the way/s in which the subject constitutes their experience of the phenomenon in question and, secondly, in providing that focus it creates a buffer between the subject's experience and that of the interviewer. That, in turn, helps to overcome any bias that may emanate from potentially divergent views held by the researcher.

The differences between first and second order perspective can be seen in the Figure 3.1 below:

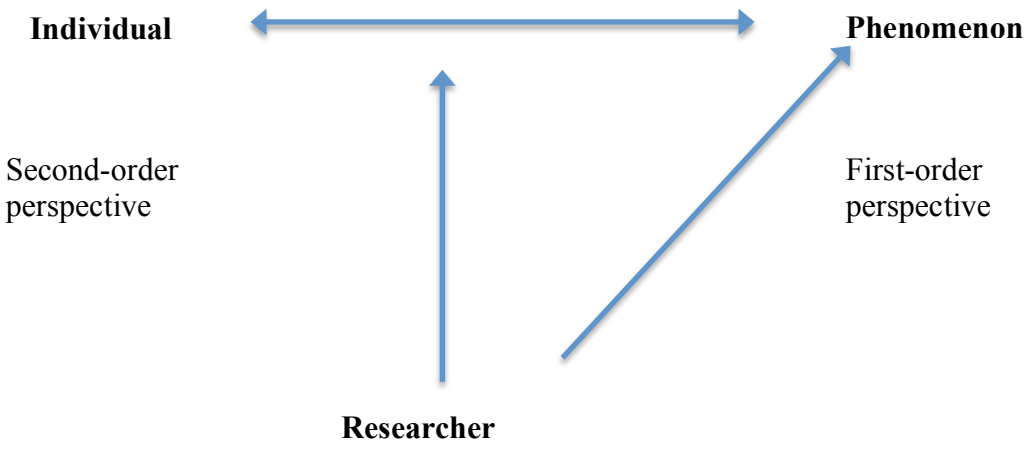


Figure 3.1- First-order and second-order perspective (Uljens, 1991)

It is precisely that focus on the individual's unique experience of a particular phenomenon, rather than the experience of the researcher, which makes phenomenography an ideal fit for this particular study.

3.4.6 Experience - the nature and form of

Experience, which is at the heart of phenomenography, forms the relationship that exists between reality, thoughts about reality and symbolic interpretation (Uljens, 1996).

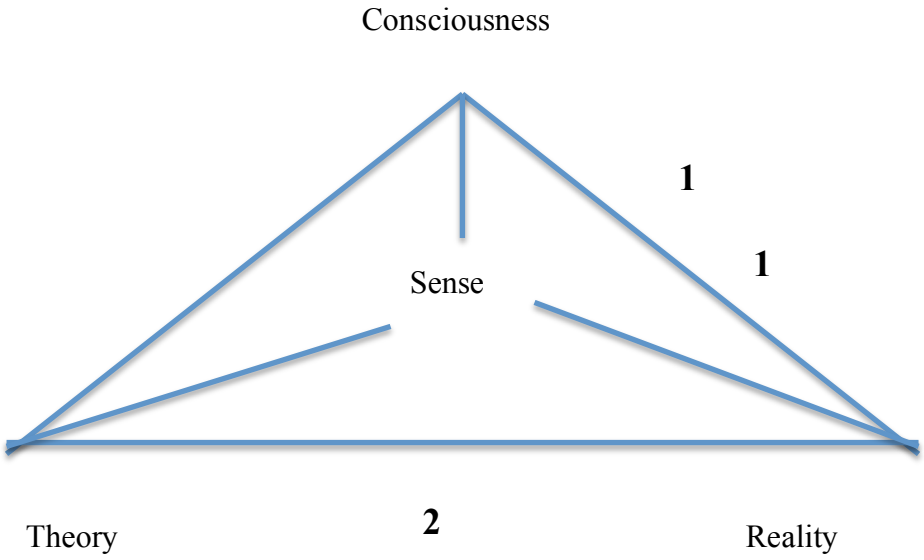


Figure 3.2 - The relation between the ontological (1) and epistemological (2) aspects of experience (Uljens, 1996).

As can be seen in Figure 3.2, experience (sense) unifies a person's awareness of a phenomenon (consciousness), their ability to speak of the phenomenon (theory) and the phenomenon itself (reality). Subsequently, the primacy of experience, according to Uljens, validates the non-dualist nature of phenomenography as it shows the way in which it dictates a person's awareness or consciousness of reality and their ability to articulate and understand that reality (Uljens, 1996).

However, the experience of one person in relation to a phenomenon does not constitute the totality of the phenomenon. It only speaks of an individual experience and accounts for only one aspect of the phenomenon and one way in which it can be experienced (Marton, 1997). Indeed, a person may experience a particular phenomenon numerous times and, in each instance, extract a different meaning from that experience. What does

happen each time is that, at the moment of experience, the person experiencing a phenomenon makes a connection between the phenomenon they are experiencing, the context in which they are experiencing it, any components of the object (Marton, 1994) and, potentially, other contexts as well (Svensson, 1984).

In the original work done by Marton (1981) which established phenomenography as a valid research methodology the common and restated aim was that phenomenography focus on uncovering descriptions of conceptions held by people in regard to a particular phenomenon (Svensson, 1997). In that relationship, between the subject and the phenomenon they are experiencing, the end result is the formulation of a conception, which in turn, informs their greater world-view (Sandberg, 2000). Those conceptions form the base unit of phenomenographic analysis (Marton & Booth, 1997; Marton, 2005) and are "constituted in the relation between perceiving subject and appearing object (both are active in constituting the conception)" (Bruce, 1997, p.103).

3.4.7 Categories of Description

Phenomenography, as a research methodology, is guided by the belief that there are only a limited number of qualitatively different ways in which people will experience a given phenomenon (Marton, 1996). That being the case, the outcome or end result of a phenomenographic study will be the mapping of those different ways into what is called the 'categories of description'. Each category represents a critically different aspect of the phenomenon in question as it is experienced. As a result, the categories are differentiated from one another by that critical difference or element of critical variation. However,

they remain related and the meaning that can be derived from them is gained through their relationship to one another and not to their existence as a separate entity. Similarly, categories of description are constituted "in the relation between researchers and the data (both are active in constituting the categories)" (Bruce, 1997, p.103). They are "based on comparison and grouping of data representing expressions of conceptions. The categories are not general characterisations of the conceptions but forms of expressing the conceptions" (Svensson 1997, p. 168). Their purpose is to represent the conceptions derived from working across the whole group with each category representing one distinct conception. In addition, they may be comprised of several conceptions, however, they are connected and united within one category of description by the way in which they all relate to one particular experience of the phenomenon in question (Bowden, 2000; Sandberg, 1994).

Within this study, as is explained in a later part of the chapter and can be seen in the data analysis process devised during this research, participants described a number of different ways in which they experienced sharing information with their learning community. While several of them appeared to be linguistically different they were united (within one category) through being a different aspect of the principle experience (sharing information with the learning community).

3.4.8 Dimensions of Variation

The distinct nature of each of the categories that go to make up the 'outcome space' is evidenced in the structure of awareness. That construct designates the elements of

variation residing in both the fore and background of awareness. The components or aspects that exist within awareness are subsequently referred to as the 'dimensions of variation'.

According to Marton and Booth (1997), the dimensions of variation may be seen to occur across all of the categories or be resident in only a select number of them. However, in the case that a dimension of variation is resident within multiple categories it will change in nature from one category to the next. Subsequently, it provides a means by which the categories can be linked thematically while still retaining the unique nature that made them distinct enough to be classed as categories in their own right. That said, a dimension of variation does not merely represent a point of thematic difference or similarity between the categories. On the contrary, it represents a level of variation in the awareness of the subject in regard to their experience of a particular phenomenon. That awareness is layered and varied in perceptual clarity with some layers residing in the foreground (of awareness) and others in the background (Lupton, 2008). Similarly, some layers exist on the fringe or margins of awareness (Marton & Booth, 1997) while others are permanently (within a certain category) in sharp focus and more again move in and out of sharp focus. Therefore, the way in which a person creates meaning and/or understanding of a particular phenomenon at a particular time is bound by the way in which the aspects of that phenomenon reside within their focal awareness (Marton & Booth, 1997).

3.4.9 Outcome Space

The 'outcome space' is, as the name suggests, the final result or outcome of the phenomenographic study. Despite being an interpretation by the researcher or research team it is firmly grounded in the data gathered during the interview process (Bruce, Buckingham, Hynd, McMahon, Roggenkamp & Stoodley, 2004). It encompasses all of the categories of description that have been formulated during interview analysis and provides "the complex of description capturing the different ways of experiencing the phenomenon is the outcome space" (Marton & Booth 1997, p.125). Similarly, it presents an ordered and logical picture of the interrelationships that exist between the various categories and, in turn, presents a larger picture of the way in which the interview cohort has experienced the phenomenon under investigation.

According to Marton (1986), "each category is a potential part of a larger structure in which the category is related to other categories of description. It is a goal of phenomenography to discover the structural framework within which various categories of understanding exist" (Marton 1986, p.34). Several notable phenomenographers (Marton, 1994; Svensson, 1994,1997; Edwards, 2007) suggest that, within the outcome space, the categories form a hierarchical or nested picture of the phenomenon in question. However, that is not a view shared by all researchers (Pramling, 1995; Sjostrom & Dahlgren, 2002) and, indeed, Akerlind (2005) contends that, due to the involvement of the researcher, every phenomenographic study will contain a necessarily interpretivist element that comes to the fore in the outcome space.

3.5 The Research Design

Having established a theoretical understanding of phenomenography and the way in which a phenomenographic interview is undertaken, the next step was to apply that understanding in a real-world, practical form. Originating from the question inherent to the research topic, a series of interview questions were formulated. They were designed to conform with the theoretical precepts previously outlined, regarding the purpose and conduct of a phenomenographic interview. Those questions would, in turn, be tested on an interview cohort.

3.5.1 Participants

In gathering an interviewee cohort two options were available to the researcher. Either all of the participants could be taken from a cohort engaging with their serious leisure activity (within the realm of 'heritage') within one specific area – such as museums, galleries, arts festivals and cultural groups. – or be sourced from several different groups with unique areas of interest (but all operating within the realm of 'heritage'). The benefit of the first option is that there might be a clearer relationship between the findings, as all of the respondents will be operating within the same serious leisure environment. As a result, the findings could make for a more definitive statement to be made regarding the information practices of that particular group or grouping of individuals. The benefit of the second option is that, sourcing respondents from a variety of areas within the realm of 'heritage' would allow for a statement to be made across the wider area of Heritage (as it

is defined in this project) rather than being specific to one smaller group within the sphere of heritage.

3.5.2 Sample Size and Recruitment

In a typical phenomenographic study "the number of participants should be sufficient to yield adequately rich descriptions of the varying conceptions which, together, comprise the phenomenon" (Bruce 1997, p.94). Sandberg (1994) and Trigwell (2000a) contend that approximately 15-20 participants will be enough to achieve that result. That will allow for the uncovering of a full range of responses to the phenomenon in question and to present the variation which is central to a phenomenographic study but not become so unwieldy as to hamper the research and slow its progress (Bowden, 2005; Trigwell, 2000b). Previous studies such as those by Bruce (2004), Patrick (2000) and Yates (2009) have been conducted using 13, 33 and 3 interviewees respectively. In order to allow for as much variation as possible, without resorting to unwieldy numbers of participants and data, twenty-two participants were used.

Gathering a suitable interview cohort was done in two ways. Firstly, based on previous studies, many of which are mentioned in Chapter two of this thesis, specific organisations (such as museums, galleries and other venues with an historical focus) and areas of interest (that fit into the area of 'heritage' as outlined in this study) that may attract people engaged in serious leisure activities were identified. Those organisations were approached and canvassed for potentially suitable participants. Similarly, individuals who had an online presence and fitted the requirements of this project were approached and

asked if they would be willing to participate in a pre-interview (to determine their ultimate suitability for inclusion in the study). Those people were also asked if they knew of any others who might be suitable for the project. That method, called snowballing, was recommended by both Robert Stebbins and Jenna Hartel (senior academics engaging with serious leisure) when contacted by this researcher to enquire about their method of gathering together an interview cohort.

It had been anticipated that potential interviewees might have displayed some reluctance to participate due to concerns they may have had regarding the nature of the research, issues with privacy (which were addressed clearly when approaching suitable respondents) or confusion regarding the way in which their area of interest might have any academic significance. However, those concerns have proven to be unfounded. While not every person asked to participate was able or willing to be involved the overwhelming majority have been more than happy to take part. Also, in regard to finding suitable participants, that has also proven relatively easy. That ease appears to be due in no small part to the area of heritage, as it is defined in this study, being a particularly rich area of serious leisure engagement. With so many people engaged in activities that fit the research interest of this paper there was a large population of potential interviewees to draw on. However, of even greater significance, in the way it has assisted the project, has been the willingness of that cohort to discuss their serious leisure activity and engage with the research being conducted.

3.5.3 Data Collection: Interviews

When dealing with abstract concepts it is necessary to couch the terms in ones the interviewee will instantly recognise. In order to ensure that the discussion that takes place within the interview remains grounded in a reality that the interviewee can understand, it is necessary to utilise questions that are understandable and accessible. To that end, "the researcher and researched must begin with some kind of (superficially) shared topic, verbalized in terms which they both recognize as meaningful" (Ashworth and Lucas, 2009, p.299). Similarly, the questions should be "broad enough to obtain meaningful responses in relation to the aim without forcing a particular structure or way of responding upon the participant" (Bruce, Mohay, Smith, Stoodley & Tweedale, 2006, p.305). To achieve that aim interviews typically begin with a question designed to allow the interviewee to begin on familiar territory by talking about him or her self. Subsequent questions, while still remaining open-ended, provide an avenue through which the interviewee can talk about how they constitute the phenomenon (Bruce, 1994). In some cases, such as the work conducted by Edwards (2007), the opening questions of a phenomenographic interview can be accompanied by pictorial or written materials. The intention is to focus the interviewee's attention on "the phenomenon being researched and the pictorial and written sections allow you, as the researcher, to see the spontaneous association by the respondents with a later found category of description" (Edwards 2007, p.93).

According to Bruce (1994) a phenomenographic interview is distinguished by its aim, the role of the interview, its focus, the structure and design of the interview itself and the way

in which the interview is carried out. Given that the aim of a phenomenographic study is to uncover and map "the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them" (Marton & Booth, 1997, p.143) it stands to reason that the phenomenographic interview would be designed and executed in such a way as to allow that stated aim to be uncovered. Indeed, the focus is not on the individual himself or herself or the world outside of the individual. Rather, it is on the individual's varying ways of experiencing a specific phenomenon within their world.

The main aim of any phenomenographic study is to uncover the 'variation of meaning' that exists regarding the way in which a phenomenon is experienced. That information is generally gathered by means of interview (Yates, 2009, p.272; Marton, 1994) and that is the method utilised by this study. In order to gather together the necessary data, a series of focussed, semi-structured and one-on-one interviews are conducted. The questions asked during the interviews concentrate on the interviewee's experience of information literacy and the results of those interviews are then transcribed for further analysis. That conforms to the opinion of Bruce, Buckingham and other researchers who have stated that, when it comes to phenomenographic interviews, a central feature of the questions is "that they should: (1) direct the interviewees towards the phenomenon, and (2) be broad enough to obtain meaningful responses in relation to the aim without forcing a particular structure or way of responding upon the participant" (Bruce et al, 2004, p. 5).

3.5.4 Interview Approach

As is emphasised in definitions of phenomenography, the central focus in a phenomenographic study is on "mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive, and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them" (Marton, 1986, p.31). Subsequently, it is expected that the phenomenographer will approach each interview (as well as the overall study) having put aside all preconceived beliefs, attitudes and opinions that might in any way influence the way in which they conduct the interview and interact with the interviewees (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000; Sandberg, 1997). That is not to suggest the researcher must remain wholly detached from the interview. On the contrary, they are expected to conduct it in such a way that it constitutes a dialogue between interviewer and interviewee. What they cannot do; however, is impose their own biases on that discourse (Sandberg, 1997).

It has been recommended that researchers strive to ensure they refrain from imposing on the interviews any preconceived 'assumptions' or 'presuppositions' they have about a topic or an audience (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p.297-298). That means, during the phenomenographic interview they will not:

- Refer to previous studies conducted in a similar area
- Impose personal views or knowledge
- Assume interview subjects hold similar beliefs to the interviewer
- Make judgments regarding the factual or truthful nature of the interviewee's responses

- Assume interview subjects possess certain levels of knowledge about any particular theoretical constructs applicable to the study and
- Create dialogue for the interviewees ('putting words in their mouth' or suggesting possible cause and effect relationships for the responses offered by the interview subjects) (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000).

That 'suspension of self' from the interview process, on the part of the interviewer, is discussed by Marton who said, "it is the researcher who is supposed to bracket preconceived ideas. Instead of judging to what extent the responses reflect an understand of the phenomenon in question which is similar to their own, he or she is supposed to focus on similarities and differences between the ways in which the phenomenon appears to the participants" (Marton, 1994, p.442).

In addition to its application during the interview itself, bracketing also begins with the construction of the interview questions. In designing those questions the aim is to provide a means through to fully apprehend the variation of experience, of the respondents, as it relates to the phenomenon in question (Bowden, 2000). Questions are open-ended in nature and do not lead interviewees towards any one conclusion, preempt any particular statements they might have or impose restrictions and limitations on the way in which they are able to express their experience of the phenomenon in question (Akerlind, 2005; Bowden, 2000, Marton & Pong, 2005).

Within this study there has been a conscious effort made to hold no preconceived ideas as regards how interview subjects will verbalise their experience of the phenomenon or their

understanding of such abstract concepts such as ‘information’ and ‘experience’. To that end, questions were designed to be simple and not weighed down by any language which might expect a certain level of education or prior knowledge. The interviewer took care to function as a relatively absent presence during the interviews and do no more than provide a means by which the questions could be presented to the respondents and linked one to the next. Any probes or follow-up questions used were simple and extended no further than ‘can you elaborate on that’ or ‘can you give me another example of that’. Those probes are ‘used, if required, to elicit further responses either of greater depth or clarity, from the interviewee (Barnard, McCosker & Gerber, 1999).

3.5.5 Reasons for selection of group: Heritage

There were several reasons for selecting, as the focus of this study, those people engaging with a serious leisure activity within a ‘Heritage’ environment. Firstly, it allows the study to connect with previous works conducted within the realm of serious leisure: most notably by Orr (2006); who wrote the key paper on ‘Heritage’ as serious leisure. In connecting with that previous study it was hoped that this project would add an extra dimension to the work (the dimension being information literacy) and, in so doing, expand our understanding of the serious leisure environment. Secondly, it was anticipated that the area of ‘Heritage’, as defined within this study, would present an easily accessible group within which to find suitable research participants. Other potential areas of interest with a serious leisure cohort might be harder to access due to factors such as location or age restrictions and, potentially, be harder to convince potential participants of the merits associated with contributing to a study. Lastly, it was decided that focussing on

a broad area within serious leisure, rather than on one specific topic, would give the study a greater chance to produce results that resonated with and were applicable to the broader serious leisure community. Leisure as a field is particularly broad and encompasses a wide range of possible areas of serious leisure engagement. A study could choose to focus on only one area of activity (such as rock climbing, barbershop quartets, doll collecting or myriad other possibilities. However, the results gained by a study with such a specific focus (in regard to its serious leisure topic) may be seen as relating only to that one endeavour and as not having the potential to speak to and for serious leisure as a whole. A study that focuses on a broad area within serious leisure (such as Heritage) does not have the same concern and can make that claim that its results are indicative of serious leisure participants as a whole, not only those operating within a particular niche. That potential, to make a statement that is applicable across serious leisure in general is a primary reason why it was decided to focus on the broad area of Heritage.

In hindsight it can be seen that Heritage, as an area of serious leisure engagement has two significant benefits. Firstly, it would appear as though 'Heritage' does not favour one gender over another and is accessible to people of a broad age range. Given that serious leisure studies have been criticized for focussing almost exclusively on the male perspective, it was fortuitous to select an area of engagement that privileges both genders. In doing so, it enabled this research project to ensure that the interview cohort was split equally between male and female – something not typical of other serious leisure studies. Similarly, in conducting the study within a field that has such broad appeal to both male and female participants, it can be suggested that the results gained have greater reach and

resonance. It should be noted; however, that despite detailed reasoning for selection of a research group within the field of Heritage, this is not a detailed qualitative study of a serious leisure community. On the contrary, it focuses on experience within a particular serious leisure community of a specific phenomenon – information literacy. That care has been taken in selection of a group within serious leisure is not an indication of the study's focus but, rather, on the meticulousness of the study itself.

3.6 Ethics Approval

In line with university policy, an application was made to the QUT University Research Ethics Unit for clearance in undertaking the pilot study (phase one and two) and the final study around which this research is based. After consideration the Ethics committee granted approval for the project and deemed it to meet the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. As no other organisations were involved or any other permission required in order to begin data collection, this constituted the only official body to which an application for ethics clearance was made.

As a change was made to the original terms of the ethics application, in regard to amending the wording of the interview questions (removal of the potentially limiting word 'volunteer') a further application was made. That application included the new set of interview questions with the limiting term ('volunteer') removed. That application for ethics variation (number: 0900001152) was considered and approval granted. In regard to this study, Andrew Demasson as a student of Queensland University of Technology (QUT) will hold intellectual property rights.

3.7 Pilot Studies

Two phases of piloting were conducted prior to the main study. Those early phases were designed to test the quality, effectiveness and appropriateness of the interview questions. In addition, they also helped to provide the principle researcher with some experience in conducting phenomenographic interviews prior to his undertaking the main study.

3.7.1 Pilot Study: Phase One

Five interviewees were sourced from within the city of Brisbane, specifically from venues in the Southbank Arts precinct, an area deemed most likely to contain sites operating within what was deemed the 'heritage' arena. Potential interviewees were not asked if they were engaged in a serious leisure activity as it was considered most likely that the term would be unfamiliar to them; however, they were asked to explain their level of engagement with an area of interest that fits within the designated sphere of 'heritage'.

3.7.1.1 Participants.

In this first phase of piloting, a total of five serious leisure practitioners were interviewed. Each participant was sourced from organisations situated in the Southbank precinct of the City of Brisbane and, due to changes made to the interview questions during stage two of piloting, the interviewees, along with their interview responses, were only used for this first phase. While gender was not a factor in the study it was decided that the interview cohort should be split as equally as possible to remove any possibility of gender bias. To

that end, three males and two females, ranging in age from 44 to 60 (44, 60, 51, 53 and 38) were interviewed (see Appendix A). No attempt was made to ensure a spread in age, in part due to time limitations making it difficult to find suitable candidates across a wide age spectrum but mainly due to longevity and persistence over an extended period of time being integral components of serious leisure. While it may have been eminently possible to find people in their early 30's or younger engaged in a serious leisure activity it has been suggested by researchers (Stebbins, 1982; 1992; 2001; Hartel 2003; 2007; Holmes, 2006) that participants are more likely to be aged in their late 30's (Stebbins proposes age 45+) or above. Research has also suggested that those people are also more likely to have pursued their interest for an extended period of time and be more able to display the key elements of 'perseverance' and 'durable outcomes' which distinguish serious leisure from casual interests and pastimes (Stebbins, 1982; 1992; 2001).

In order to broaden the scope of the study and remove any possible bias that could arise if all interviewees were sourced from the one site it was decided that each respondent would be operating at a different organisation (see Appendix B). The only unifying element, apart from their location being within the same geographical precinct, was that each deals with the subject of heritage. Given freedom of choice in terms of interview subjects it was also decided to include people who dealt with heritage in a different fashion or, at least, a different heritage outlet (see Appendix C). It was anticipated that, if variation of experience was to occur it would be more likely to be found in people who, while united by the area of 'heritage', were dealing with it through different areas of interest.

3.7.1.2 Data Collection: Interview question development

In order to gather together the necessary data, a series of focussed, semi-structured and one-on-one interviews were conducted, the results of which were subsequently transcribed for future analysis. Given that the participants were specifically chosen because they do engage in what is deemed a serious leisure activity, the questions naturally centered on their experience of using information while engaged with their particular area of interest. That conforms to the opinion of Bruce (2004) and other researchers who have stated that, when it comes to phenomenographic interviews, a central feature of the questions is "that they should: (1) direct the interviewees towards the phenomenon, and (2) be broad enough to obtain meaningful responses in relation to the aim without forcing a particular structure or way of responding upon the participant" (Bruce et al, 2002, p. 5).

As the aim of the study is to identify the conceptions of the phenomenon in question it is important to have developed a set of questions which, when presented to interviewees, will effectively draw out from them those answers which will make the potential categories of description most apparent. They are "a complex of aspects of the way that the experience of the phenomenon in question has been expressed, and is thereby logically constrained to stand in clear relation to the phenomenon" (Marton & Booth, 1997, p.124). Given that there are also a finite number of ways in which a phenomenon can be experienced, if there wasn't then every person could, theoretically, be experiencing a different form of reality at the same time and would, therefore, be unable to communicate with anyone other than themselves (Marton & Booth, 1997) the

categories of description reflect the 'collective level' of ways in which people experience a phenomenon.

In designing the interview questions, it is chiefly important to "keep in mind that the primary purpose of each interview is to draw out the interviewee's experience and understanding of the phenomenon" (Edwards, 2007, p.93). As people can express themselves in a variety of different ways and will bring different histories, including elements such as education, gender, age and ethnicity, to an interview they need to be provided with enough opportunities to express themselves and their unique conceptions of the world (Edwards, 2007). Questions asked during the interview need to be understandable and relatable as well as providing the interviewee with the opportunity to speak freely and for a dialogue to be established between them and the interviewer. It is also important for questions to keep interviewees on topic and for probing questions to be used as a way of getting them to most clearly articulate their ideas and experiences.

With that in mind a series of questions were formulated for testing in a pilot study. The results of that study would show if the questions were as relatable, understandable and inclusive (in that they gave each interviewee the same opportunity to reflect on their serious leisure activity) as intended. They were as follows:

1. Tell me about your volunteer role.
    1.1. Can you expand on that volunteer role – do you liaise with other people, do you do one specific job or do you have multiple jobs that you perform?
2. How do you use information in your volunteer role?

2.1. Describe the experience of effective information use in your role as a volunteer

2.2. How would you use information effectively to perform your role?

3. Describe a time when you used information to learn about the area in which you volunteer.
4. Describe a time when you used information to perform your role as a volunteer.
5. Describe what you consider information to be.
6. What filters do you use, if any, for your selection of information?

In order to gain the greatest possible depth from each interview a series of follow-up questions or generic probes were utilised. While they did not change the actual nature of the initial question they did allow for the interview to maintain a steady, conversational flow.

Those probes included queries such as:

- Can you tell me more about that?
- Can you expand on that?
- Can you give me an example?
- Why is that important?

At the end of each interview participants were asked if there was anything more they would like to add, any questions they would like to expand on or anything they would like to clarify. It had initially been expected that each interview would take between 45-60 minutes. However, during the actual interview process none took longer than 40 minutes and the briefest of the five interviews was completed in 27 minutes. Each interview was audio recorded and then fully transcribed for future analysis.

3.7.1.3 Pilot study interview evaluation

At the end of the first round of interviews and at the completion of Phase 1 of the initial pilot study, in consultation with principal supervisors, it was determined that, while the data obtained was highly informative, emphasis on the term 'volunteer' needed to be removed and the questions themselves refined considerably and bracketed more thoroughly. To that end, each question was evaluated for its effectiveness, freedom from bias and capacity to operate as a leading question. A detailed discussion of the interview questions, post phase one of piloting, is included in Appendix J.

During the first phase of piloting the research topic and the questions asked during the interview stage of the phenomenographic study included and were informed by the term 'volunteer'. Seen in isolation it may not appear to be apparent as to why the word was used and, subsequently, why it was ultimately removed. However, there were several reasons for its inclusion in this initial phase of research just as there were solid reasons for its removal in phase two. Firstly, career volunteers are an integral part of Robert Stebbins development of the serious leisure arena. According to Stebbins, the founder of and most prolific writer on serious leisure, serious leisure is comprised of three distinct avenues of engagement - amateur, career volunteer and hobbyist. However, what distinguishes volunteers and volunteering from the other two fields is altruism (Orr, 2006). Whereas amateurs and hobbyists are intrinsically linked to commercial interests or professional counterparts – amateur being the foil to professional and hobbyist having commercial equivalents as well as having a potentially fiscal motivation – volunteers are primarily driven by an altruistic desire to assist other people as well as themselves.

Amateurs and hobbyists also have a greater degree of personal motivation in that their activity, even if it garners no financial reward and benefits others in some way, is driven primarily by self-interest. Volunteers, even if performing a task that rewards them in terms of their Serious Leisure career, are still motivated in larger part by the desire to provide uncoerced help to an external agent or agency. Subsequently, it was decided that in dealing with volunteers the study would be more likely to deal with people whose engagement with their serious leisure carried minimal external motivations such as a potential financial career, establishment of a reputation that could lead to a financial career. It was also thought that focusing on volunteers would allow the study to deal with an area within serious leisure that has been previously underrepresented (Stebbins, 2004) but which had generated three papers dealing with 'heritage' (Orr, 2006; Graham, 2004; Holmes, 2006) the area within serious leisure this study would be using as a context.

3.7.2 Pilot Study: Phase Two

During the first stage of piloting, one of the project's aims was to determine whether or not the research topic might provide enough scope and potential for a more detailed study at the PhD level. Having determined that it did possess both of those factors and that it held enough interest for the researcher (who would be required to persist with it for the 3 year duration of his doctoral studies) a thorough review of the original project was undertaken. The final result of that review was the decision to reframe both the topic and the overall direction of the project. In its first phase the study had paid specific attention to the volunteer activities of serious leisure participants and, subsequently, examined

their information literacy levels within that specific context. However, on closer examination, it was determined that focussing on one specific avenue of serious leisure engagement would limit the project's overall value, reach and scope. As a result, the focus on volunteer activity was eliminated and the emphasis placed on the participant's engagement with their serious leisure activity in whatever fashion they chose to pursue it.

3.7.2.1 Participants

A preliminary discussion was conducted to ensure that potential interviewees were actually involved in a Serious Leisure activity and not merely pursuing a casual interest or pastime. A judgement, as to their suitability, was made based on Stebbins' six qualities of serious leisure participation. That form of assessment was used in preference to Gould's Serious Leisure Inventory and Measure (SLIM), a quantifiable, psychometric approach to distinguishing serious from casual participation (Gould, 2008), for two main reasons. Firstly, given the smaller research population being addressed at the pilot stage of interviews there was more time available to directly address potential candidates and ascertain their suitability. Secondly, the study does not deal with communities of serious leisure activity wherein some people may be more heavily involved in the pursuit than others and it proves more difficult and therefore more necessary to discern the serious from the casual participants. In this study, the respondents are sourced across a wide range of backgrounds with the only unifying factor being that their serious leisure activity falls within the sphere of 'heritage'. Subsequently, those people tend to announce themselves through their actions (such as originating and/or heading a group that revolves around their serious leisure interest as well as producing materials that deal expressly

with the knowledge base which informs that interest) and make very clear the serious nature of their leisure career. Another factor is that Gould's questionnaire, the data-gathering tool used by the SLIM, is a relatively ponderous document that does not ask the potential interviewee to reflect on their serious leisure activity but, rather, makes assumptions for them. Certain of the questions asked in the SLIM could act as prompts during the pre-interview discussions I will be conducting. However, it is not anticipated that they would, when delivered *in toto*, produce a more accurate reading of a person's serious leisure engagement. That being the case, a pre-interview discussion was deemed to be a far more appropriate means of gauging whether or not the interviewees were indeed engaged in a serious leisure activity.

In the second phase of piloting, a total of three interviews were conducted. The reduced number of interviews, in comparison to the first phase, was primarily due to a reduction in the amount of time available for sourcing the interview cohort as well as conducting the dialogues. Unlike at stage one, the majority of interviewees were sourced from the wider South-East Queensland region (see Appendices F and G) not, as at the first phase, only from the Southbank arts precinct. The reason for that is twofold. Firstly, with more interviewees being required, it becomes difficult to find suitable respondents. Therefore, focussing on only one small area, even one as rich in potential respondents as the Southbank arts precinct, limits the supply of potential participants. Looking to the broader community increases that supply exponentially. The only condition being that, as with the first phase, interviewees needed to be engaged in a serious leisure activity which fitted within the field of 'heritage' as it has been defined by this study (see Appendix H). Secondly, by increasing the pool from which respondents are sourced it provides a greater

chance of including people who are engaging with potentially different areas of heritage than those found in one specific location.

As with the first phase of piloting, while gender was not a factor in the study itself an attempt was made to ensure there was an equitable split between male and female respondents. To aid that endeavour, two females ages 43 and 38, and one male age 58, were interviewed (see Appendix E). No attempt was made to source participants across a broad age range; however, during the next phase of interviewing, outside of the pilot phase, that would be a consideration. As was explained during discussion of the interview cohort sourced for phase one of the project, it is anticipated that the majority of suitable interview prospects will be aged in at least their late 30's (Stebbins, 1982; 1992; 2001; Hartel, 2003; 2007; Holmes, 2006). That being the case, the three participants utilised for this second phase of piloting are typical of the expected age range.

3.7.2.2 Data Collection: Interview Question Development

After evaluation of the initial questions piloted at phase one of the research project (as mentioned previously) a new set of interview questions were devised which were expected to more fully meet the aims of the study. Those questions were:

1. Tell me about your interest in Heritage

Additional Questions:

- How did you come to be interested in this area of Heritage?
- How/In what ways do you pursue or express that interest in heritage/your heritage area?

2. Can you describe a time you used information to learn about your Heritage interest?

3. What kinds of information have you used and/or do you use to learn about your heritage interest?

4. What part does information play in pursuing/engaging with your heritage interest?

Alternative Question 4

- In experiencing (pursuing/engaging with) your heritage interest, what part does information play?

5. How do you use information to learn about your heritage interest?

A detailed discussion of the interview questions, post phase two of piloting, is included in Appendix K.

Three interviews were conducted to determine the merits, strengths, weaknesses and effectiveness of the revised questions. The following outlines a reflection on the second phase of piloting.

3.7.2.3 Pilot Study Interview Evaluation

On examination of the questions used during phase two of piloting it was determined that they worked well and should be retained for use during the main study. In particular, it was clear, based on the responses given by participants and their ease in engaging with the question that they would be suitable for use with a wider audience. The revisions that had been made, from phase one to phase two were judged as satisfactory and no further

amendments to the questions were deemed necessary. However, as there had been a change made to the emphasis of the questions, from phases one to two it was decided that none of the participants would be re-interviewed for the main study. Similarly, none of the data gathered during the two phases of piloting would be used for data analysis in the main study. While the quality of the data acquired during the pilot studies was high and, especially in the case of pilot study two, could have been utilised it was decided that it would be best if a fresh interview cohort were used.

3.7.3 Main Study

On completion of the second phase of piloting and after examination of the results obtained during that pilot phase it was determined that the study was ready to move forward to a final stage.

3.7.3.1 Interview questions

The final phase of piloting saw the use of an amended set of questions. The changes that had been made (from the first phase of piloting) are outlined earlier in this document and do not require re-telling. However, based on the work done during the second pilot phase, to re-design the interview questions, it was determined that they worked satisfactorily and would be retained for use in this final stage of the research project. The notable omission, from stage one to stage two, of the term 'volunteer' remained intact and the questions were directed only towards the interviewee's experience pursuing their serious leisure activity in whatever format and venue they chose to do so. That decision, to remove the volunteer component, was proven to be the correct one when it came time to expand the

list of interviewees. The subsequent range of participants utilised (representative of such diverse areas of interest within the field of 'heritage') and the ability of the study to speak to the widest audience possible, within the serious leisure community, would not have been possible had that focus been retained. That said a future study focussing only on those people engaged with their serious leisure activity within a volunteer format would potentially be of great interest and tie in with work already undertaken by researchers such as Stebbins (1998, 2004, 2007) and Orr (2006).

The questions utilised in the final study were as follows:

1. Tell me about your (heritage) area of interest

Additional Questions:

How did you come to be interested in this area?

How/In what ways do you pursue or express that interest in your area of interest?

2. Can you describe a time you used information to learn about your (heritage) area of interest?
3. What kinds of information have you used and/or do you use to learn about your (heritage) area of interest
4. What part does information play in pursuing or engaging with your (heritage) area of interest

Alternative Question:

In pursuing/engaging with your area of interest what part does information play?

5. How do you use information to learn about your (heritage) area of interest?

Based on analysis of the interview questions during phase two of the pilot study, one of the additional questions was removed ('How/In what ways do you pursue or express that interest in your area of interest). On closer examination it became clear that interviewees did not engage with it and were of the opinion that it did little more than repeat what was asked in a previous question. Continuing to use it in conjunction with the prior questions could have potentially damaged the interview's flow and unsettled the interviewee. Therefore, it was determined that it would be dropped from the final study unless a situation occurred where the interviewees had not responded well to the previous questions and needed a further prompt. Examination of the other questions used in the second phase of piloting determined that, while some were understood to be potentially challenging to the interviewees, there was greater value to be had by retaining them. In particular, question four – 'What part does information play in pursuing/engaging with your (heritage) area of interest' – was seen being potentially difficult for the interviewees to answer as it required them to think deeply about their relationship with and experience of information and how it impacts on their engagement with their serious leisure activity. However, despite that understanding and acknowledgement by the interviewees of its difficulty, it was seen as having the potential to provide a degree of reflection that the other questions may not have elicited from the respondents.

Aside from the omission of one alternate question, the principle alteration made to the final study was that rather than use the term 'heritage' to describe the interviewee's serious leisure interest they were instead asked about their 'area of interest'. The reason for that change was relatively minor. While the term 'heritage' was not considered to be

in any way distracting for the interviewees and lead to any potential biases or omissions in their responses, it was felt that use of the term was somewhat redundant and interfered with the conversational tone of the interview. Also, if the interviewee did not constitute their activity as something that belongs within the realm of 'heritage' then it might have impacted negatively on the interview itself, even if it did not hamper their responses to the questions. 'Heritage' is a term assigned by this study to a particular area of interest within the serious leisure domain. The respondents selected for interview were chosen not because they identified as operating within that particular domain ('heritage') but because the study determined that was the field they were operating within. Therefore, it was decided that using the term, while relatively innocuous, might present a burden of some description on the interviewee and unconsciously require them to make some assessment of whether or not they agreed with the way in which the study had categorised their area of interest. All of that being the case, the term 'heritage' was removed from the interview question but still framed the area of endeavour each interviewee was seen to be operating within.

3.7.3.2 Pre-Interview

As with the earlier two stages of piloting a preliminary discussion was held with each of the potential interviewees. The aim of those discussions being to determine that all participants were genuinely involved in what could be classed and defended as being a Serious Leisure activity (as outlined by Stebbins, 1982) and not merely pursuing a casual interest, a pastime or even engaging with a professional activity (one in which they received remuneration) outside of their regular business hours. As explained previously,

that method of evaluation was deemed to be more effective than Gould's (2008) 'Serious Leisure Inventory and Measure (SLIM)'. The reasons remain unchanged. Gould's proposed metric is flawed in its design (it lacks any reflective element and makes certain assumptions for its respondents) and is far too cumbersome for a study of this particular size, which are two faults that Gould has acknowledged (2011).

The design of the pre-interview was that it followed the format of a simple discussion rather than involving any complicated questionnaire or similar document that the potential participants would be required to complete. Using that less formal method made it easier to retain an informal atmosphere and tone during the main interviews. A structured task, such as questionnaire, would have been at odds with that and may even have made them less likely to agree to participate.

The 'discussion' had with each potential interviewee didn't follow any formal lines but did incorporate Stebbins components of serious leisure. They can be seen in the Appendix to this document but include the following: 'perseverance', 'career', 'significant effort', 'unique ethos', 'identification' and 'durable outcomes'. During the course of each discussion the potential participant was asked about their leisure activity with particular emphasis on responses to those six elements. In the majority of cases the potential interviewee flagged their suitability very quickly through what they said about the length of time they had been engaged with their activity, how important it is to them, how big a part it plays in their life, how much effort they put in to pursuing it and what they get out of it.

Out of 34 pre-interviews, twenty-five participants were deemed suitable to be included in the final study. Of those not considered to be suitable, five were disqualified as it emerged they were engaging with their leisure activity for the purposes of financial or professional gain. In those cases, three were profiting from having turned their leisure activity into a paid hobby and two were motivated by certain educational requirements. The other four disqualified participants were not considered to be engaging with their leisure activity at a level that was commensurate with the tenets of serious leisure. Of those final twenty-five potential participants, twenty-two took part in the interview portion of this study while the other three declined, for various reasons, to continue.

3.7.3.3 Participants

Twenty-two participants took part in the final phase of interviews, which was a significant increase from the five, and three participants involved in phases one and phase two, respectively, of the pilot study. As with the pilot study, the interviewees were sourced from South-East Queensland and the Melbourne metropolitan region. Significantly, however, none of the participants used during either phase of the pilot study were included in the main interviews. Similarly, none of the interviews conducted at the pilot phase were used in the main study. As there had been a change to the nature of the questions, from phases one to two and on to the final study, it was decided that none of the interviews conducted during phase one could be utilised in the main study. While it is likely that the information obtained during the interviews was not affected greatly by inclusion of the word 'volunteer' (as outlined previously during phase one and in phase two discussion) there was still the chance that some bias could have occurred.

Wanting to protect the integrity of the main study and the conclusions that be drawn based on its data, it was decided that no risk should be taken. Subsequently, those interviews and the information gained within them were omitted from the final study. However, they have been retained within this thesis and the data can still be found earlier in this chapter as well as within the appendix (Appendix J). As a result, twenty-two entirely new interviews of twenty-two new interviewees were conducted.

3.7.3.4 Participant demographics and 'heritage' interest

One criticism levelled towards serious leisure research is that it has been too male-centric, focussing in particular on Caucasian males aged fifty years or older (Dilley & Scraton, 2010; Lo Verde, Modi & Cappello, 2011; Raisborough, 1999, 2006, 2007). As can be seen in Table 3.1, this study set out to redress that imbalance by developing an interview cohort that was spread across multiple age groups and divided equally between male and female participants.

Once it was established that a potential interviewee was engaged with a serious leisure activity and operating within the field of 'heritage' (as defined within this research), every effort was made to ensure those who were utilised at the interview stage provided for equality of gender participation and a spread of participants within varying age groups. Similarly, it was decided that participants should be engaged with their serious leisure activity in different venues and focussing on different areas within the field of heritage. That was done primarily to ensure that the study could speak for as broad a range of serious leisure participants as possible. Had they all been engaged with art,

music or some similar area of heritage then it could be suggested that the results are only applicable to people operating within that one arena. Had they all been engaging with their serious leisure activity within an organisation or some such other institutional settings then the results would have shown a picture of that particular environment but not spoken to and for the broader field of serious leisure (in which participants can be engaging with their serious leisure activity through a number of different outlets and avenues).

In addition, it was decided that participants would be sourced from both South-East Queensland and the Melbourne metropolitan area. Again, that decision was made to ensure that the end results spoke for and to the largest serious leisure audience possible (within the confines of this study) and lessened the impact of geographic bias. No attempt was made to ensure an equal split between representatives from each region. However, as can be seen in Table 1, the study ultimately included ten participants from the Melbourne Metropolitan region (listed as 'Vic', for Victoria – the state in which Melbourne is located- in the table) and 12 from South-East Queensland (listed as Qld in the table).

Table 3.1 illustrates the diversity that is inherent in this study's interview cohort. As mentioned previously, of twenty-two interviewees there is an equal split between the genders with eleven male and eleven female participants engaging with their serious leisure activity in two of Australia's Eastern States (Queensland and Victoria). In addition, there is broad spread of age groups. While no participants are younger than thirty-eight years of age that does nothing to diminish the diversity of the participants involved in this study, something which is not typical of most serious leisure research

(Lo Verde, Modi & Cappello, 2011; Raisborough, 1999, 2006, 2007). Interestingly, while the bulk of the interviewees fall within either the 40-50 (36% of interviewees), 50-60 (23% of interviewees) or 60-70 (27% of interviewees) age brackets there is not an equal split of male to female participants in each age grouping.

Despite the attempts made to ensure diversity across the age groups no attempt was made to ensure the same equality within the various age groups. As a result, certain groupings are populated more by one gender than the other which may be coincidence or hint at some other significance that is outside the province of this study. That said, while it may be assumed that people who fall within the stereotypical 'senior' age grouping of 60+ years would have more time to devote to activities which could constitute serious leisure engagement, it is interesting that in this study they comprise only 31% of participants.

Age diversity aside, Table 1 shows the broad range of activities the interview cohort were engaged with (listed as 'Area of Interest) and provides a basic classification for each activity (listed as 'Interest Type'). While 'arts' and humanities related activities dominate there is still representation from areas with a sporting, construction and engineering focus.

Interview	Age	Gender	Location	Area of Interest	Interest Type
1	43	M	Vic	Football Club	Sporting/Community
2	43	M	Qld	Heavy Metal Music	Music /History
3	82	F	Qld	Scrapbooking	Folk art/ History (cultural)
4	65	M	Qld	Wooden Boat Building	Construction - maritime
5	52	F	Vic	Australian Artists	Art (making)
6	58	F	Qld	Historical Society	History (social)
7	64	M	Qld	Tramway Museum	Transportation
8	62	M	Vic	Australian Cars (Restoration)	Engineering
9	47	F	Vic	Friends of the Zoo	History
10	44	M	Qld	Australian Military History	Military
11	60	M	Vic	Metal Detecting	Archaeology
12	38	M	Qld	History Group	History
13	53	F	Qld	Genealogy (Bundaberg)	Genealogical
14	49	F	National	Australian Heritage	General historical
15	43	M	Qld	Bush Heritage	Flora & Fauna
16	45	F	Vic	Australian Toys & Games	Leisure
17	39	F	Vic	Australian Women's Fashion	History (cultural)
18	56	F	Vic	Australian Theatre (fringe)	Theatre
19	68	F	Vic	Australian Landmark site	History
20	44	F	Qld	Australian Television	Film & Television
21	61	M	Vic	Amateur Photography	Media
22	56	M	Vic	Australian Literature	Literature

Table 3.1: Interviewee demographics and area of interest

As with both phases of piloting, the interviews varied in length from 45 to 90 minutes in duration. No attempt was made to limit the interview to any predetermined span of time. Instead each interview was viewed as complete when each question had been answered and the interviewee indicated that they had nothing further to add. Each interview was audio recorded and then fully transcribed for future analysis.

3.8 Data Analysis

Bruce suggests that, when analyzing data in a phenomenographic study the activities most commonly followed are, “becoming familiar with the data, identifying relevant parts of the data, comparing extracts to find sources of variation or agreement, grouping

similar segments of data, articulating preliminary categories, constructing labels for the categories and determining the logical relationships between the categories" (Bruce 1999, p.43). To begin with, the research question places focus on a phenomenon. In so doing, it begins a process whereby a particular aspect of that phenomenon is isolated and attention - of the research sample and the researcher - directed towards it. In becoming the focus of attention it is isolated from the broader phenomenon and achieves an existence both in and of itself (Marton 1997, p.132). The researcher adopts the position of a learner and, therefore, does not address the data with a pre-determined outcome in mind (to do so would be to adopt the position of a teacher) but, rather, attempts to develop their knowledge and understanding by a close reading of the data gathered from the subjects.

In undertaking that close reading, the researcher attempts to 'unpack' meaning and structure from the research data they have gathered, across the range of interviews and not on an individual-by-individual basis. The aim being to uncover a communal description of variation in experience, rather than one that speaks only for the individual (Marton, 1994). In order to do that the researcher first identifies the similarities and differences that are apparent in the interview transcripts. Those similarities and differences represent the variation found in dealings with the phenomenon (Edwards 2007, p. 97) and are the central focus of any phenomenographic study. In identifying that variation, the researcher is beginning the process of mapping the range of responses to the phenomenon in question. The second phase of that process will involve establishing a 'preliminary' set of categories

According to Marton, the collected data (gathered via interview and observable in the form or transcripts) "contains two sorts of material: that pertaining to individuals and that pertaining to the collective. It is the same stuff, of course, but it can be viewed from two different perspectives to provide different contexts for isolated statements and expressions relevant to aspects of the object of research" (Marton 1997, p.133). While the aim is not to isolate the individual experience and while the opinion is that no attempt be made to account for individual variation (Boon, Johnston and Webber, 2007) it will be necessary to 'unpack' the individual expression of a phenomenon in order to uncover the similarities and differences which exist within the collective experience. Indeed, the individual may express more than one conception of the phenomenon (Marton 1994; Sandberg, 2000). However, rather than being dismissed as contradictory, each statement is equally valid.

The outcome of that analytic process is twofold. Firstly, there is the identification of an array of distinctly different ways in which a phenomenon is experienced. Secondly, a framework is developed which establishes the logical relationship that exists between those different ways of experiencing the phenomenon in question (Lupton, 2008). That framework is known as the outcome space and consists of the "complex of categories of description comprising distinct groupings of aspects of the phenomenon and the relationships between them" (Marton 1997, p. 125). 'Outcome space' is, then, another term for what we have previously called the phenomenon or 'the thing as it appears to us' (Bowden and Walsh 2000) and emphasizes the validity and significance of experience in establishing the tangible qualities of an object. Where the study begins with a

phenomenon and a question revolving around that phenomenon, the outcome spaces are the answer to the question framed as phenomena.

When undertaking a phenomenographic study there is much that is clear and well laid out. It is clear what to begin with (data to be analysed) and clear of what the end result should be (categories of description and an outcome space). However, what is missing is the part in between. That is, how to conduct the data analysis. When textbooks dealing with phenomenography discuss data analysis they do so by saying that the interviews are analysed and data extracted. However, they fail to explain exactly how that analysis is conducted. Discussion may revolve around the problems inherent with phenomenographic analysis, such as it only reflecting the relationship between interviewer and interviewee (Edwards, 2005; Saljo, 1997; Saljo & Wyndhamn, 1987) and, therefore, lacking replicability (Sandberg, 1997). Or, it might pose solutions to that problem, such as interjudge agreement (Marton, 1986; Saljo, 1988) or solutions to the problems posed by interjudge agreement (Bowden, 1999). However, what is missing in the discussion regarding phenomenography's limitations (and solutions to those limitations) is an explicit exposition revolving around how best to conduct data analysis during a phenomenographic study. Researchers are aware they have to analyse their data (in the case of this study, the interview data) and they know that, during analysis, they will be looking for variation in regard to the responses given to their research questions. Similarly, they know that they are attempting to answer a question that has been posed to them, in relation to a particular phenomenon. They also know that validity and reliability is of vital importance. However, what they are not told is how exactly to conduct that analysis or how to navigate their way through the analysis phase in order to ensure that

all of those things they do know are attained.

What has been done in this research project is to propose (and carry out) a simple method (or blueprint) by which preliminary data analysis can be conducted. It needs to be noted, however, that the process outlined is only intended to assist in managing, organising and making sense of the data gathered. It is not proposed as a means by which the awareness structures can be established. On that contrary, that part (the awareness structures) of the data analysis process is seen by me to be a necessarily separate element. To that end, what is outlined over the following pages deals only with the data analysis process up to the point at which the categories of description may begin to take shape. I consider it to be a highly useful tool for people new to or with little background in phenomenography.

The process itself is easy to follow, easy to execute and requires no sophisticated software or knowledge of any complex systems. It is inexpensive, highly portable and easily up-dated. In addition it allows the researcher, who is entrusted with analysing the data, to be intimately connected with all aspects of and decisions pertaining to the analysis process as a whole. Software, such as NVivo, allows for some structure to be imposed during analysis. However, there is the risk that it may become too influential a factor in determining the categories of description and result in the researcher becoming somewhat removed from the data he or she is analysing. The method proposed in this research, on the other hand, while it places a far greater reliance on the researcher, has the potential to make them more connected to the data he or she is analysing. Following its proposed structure they transcribe the interviews, which connects them to the data. They then extract data (in the form of quotes) from the interviews - data they consider to

answer the question they have posed and which should be guiding not only the study itself but also the entire analysis process. Those two steps are common to all phenomenographic studies but still need to be mentioned as they are an integral part of the analysis process and lead into the significant contribution this study makes to data analysis. That contribution begins with the researcher assigning preliminary headings for each unit of data (each unit equals a quote from the transcribed interview) that is extracted and assigning a code for each piece of data (quote) that lets them know where that data has come from (which interview and where in the interview the quote can be located). The process that was adopted by this research is as follows:

3.8.1 Step 1 – Data extraction

This research proposes the use of PowerPoint as the most ideal tool by which to capture that information. Not only is it a very simple devise to use it is also common to any Microsoft office package and would require no significant financial outlay. Similarly, it is very flexible in how it can be presented and is easily amended and up-dated. Figure 3.3 shows how this research has structured the PowerPoint slide so as to capture the data outlined above.

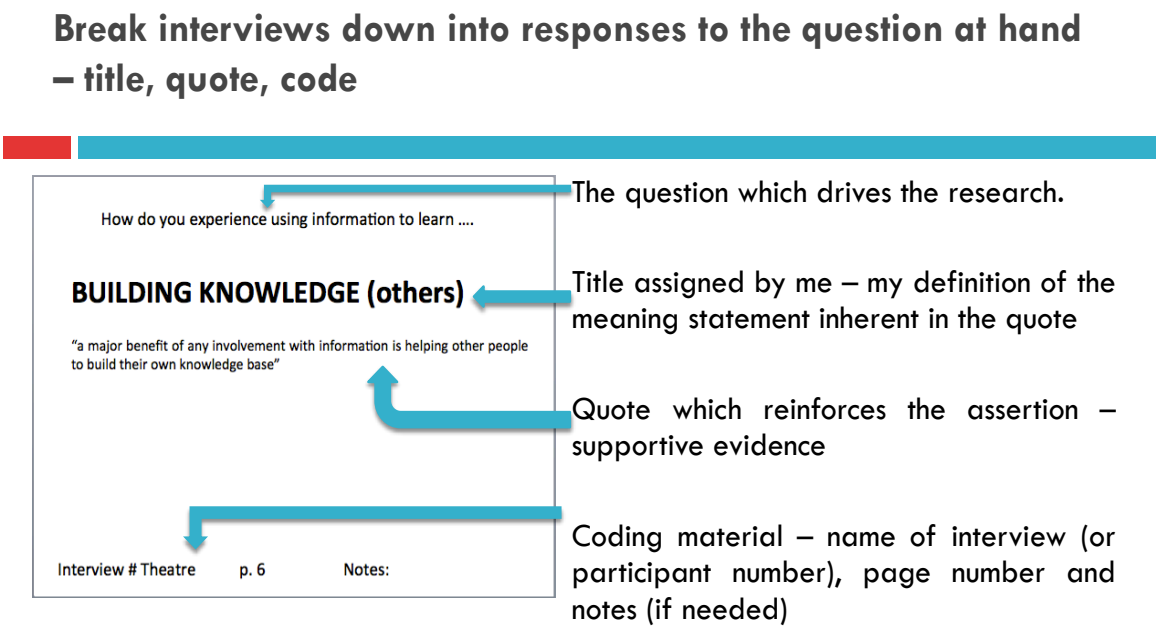


Figure 3.3 – Data Extraction

As can be seen, the top of each slide includes the question that the research is attempting to answer. Including it in that fashion serves as a constant reminder to the researcher of what they are attempting to answer and what the data they extract (from the interviews) needs to be guided by. Rather than expecting the researcher to remain focussed on that objective (the research question) throughout each analysed interview and not be subject to some distraction or divergence from the central theme, the slide reminds them of their objective. Similarly, when they are extracting data they can always use it as a reference devise and ask themselves if what they are including as data genuinely forms an answer to the question they have posed.

The second component on the slide is a major title assigned by the researcher to explain the meaning of the quote they have extracted from the interview. The title only serves as

a guide for the researcher and can come from something included within the quote or be purely an invention of the researcher that makes sense, for them, of the data/quote they have extracted. At this point the researcher does not have to ensure that all similar quotes have the same title. On the contrary, they may have multiple variations on the same theme. However, as the assigned title refers to the data extracted there will be a logical relationship between the two. That logical relationship will allow the researcher, at a later stage of the analysis process, to group similar titles together. That grouping will not be purely on their possessing an identical title but on one title approximating another or belonging, logically, to a similar grouping. That provides a certain degree of flexibility for the researcher and, rather than being tied to a rigid definition of the data/quote they can 'play' with it and see how it sits in relation to other data extracted within the interview and the overall study. It can also be suggested that such flexibility fits better with a study that is looking for experiential relationships rather than quantifiably measurable outcomes.

The third component on the slide is the data element or quote that has been extracted from the interview. Although appearing third on the slide it will be included prior to the assigning of a title. As mentioned earlier, the quote will relate directly to the question or topic that drives the research and which can be found at the top of the slide. When including the data/quote the researcher can assess it against the research question and see whether it is appropriate for inclusion. Similarly, regarding how much of the quote to include the researcher can use that reference tool to see how much is required in order to fully answer the question while remaining true to the intent of the interviewee. As every effort needs to be made to ensure that quotes are not taken out of context, having those

elements to which the researcher can refer (such as the title) increases the likelihood that context and intent will be preserved.

At the bottom of the slide is the coding material that provides the name of the interview (or participant number), page number on which the quote can be found and any notes that have been included by the researcher. That final component is of great importance to the researcher, not only in allowing them to keep track of their data analysis, but for later stages of the project where they will need to provide reference material for the quotes used to explain their categories of description.

3.8.2 Step 2 – Grouping of data

Once the interviews have been analysed and the data extracted (each quote will be allocated their own slide) the researcher can begin to organise the range of responses they have found. As proposed by this research, they will chart the responses to see how many unique titles were assigned to the interviews and then group the responses based on similarity. It is possible that every slide will have a different heading and no literal similarity will exist at this stage. That is perfectly acceptable. However, it can be assumed that if analysis is being done by one person there will be a repetition of headings as the individual will be prone to represent meaning using similar titles and phrases. Even in instances where analysis is conducted by a team of researchers it can be expected that some similarity will occur due to shared language. At this point, however, the aim is only to gather together the variety of headings, nothing more. In regard to how many interviews should be analysed before tentative categories can be formed, this study took

the approach that with only twenty-two interviews conducted it would be best to wait until all interviews had been analysed before beginning work on category construction. It has been proposed that a preliminary version of the categories can be generated after a small number of interviews have been analysed (Trigwell 2000b). However, this research considers that approach to be incongruous with the phenomenographers aim of viewing all interviews conducted as a whole and not as individual units of study or a subset of a larger study (Trigwell, 2000b). As such, no attempt was made to begin work on the categories of description until all interviews had been fully analysed.

As analysis began with the use of PowerPoint slides to capture each unit of data (represented by a quote answering the research question) then next step is to gather together all of the slides into one presentation. The aim is merely to have all of the responses in the one location so that the process of grouping can begin. Using PowerPoint slides allows the researcher or research team to move responses easily as they begin to see patterns emerging or recognise similarity and/or variation. It provides a tactile (in a virtual sense) means of arranging data and connects the researcher in a very real way to the data they are working with. Any decision made as to grouping, definition, meaning or understanding is left entirely to the researcher. The tool, PowerPoint, is computational but the process is very human and very relational – something which fits well in phenomenographic study. Similarly, headings can be assigned, grouped and removed as seen fit by the researcher/s. Doing so requires no special skill set or level of knowledge.

In addition, PowerPoint (or some similar program) provides a way in which the chronology of the analysis process can be saved for future use (such as presenting or defending the decisions made during analysis). Each time a change is made to the order of the slides a new PowerPoint presentation can be quickly and easily created so that an archive of the research can be created and retained. Figure 3.4 shows how the slides may be arranged at a slightly more advanced stage of analysis. As can be seen in the highlighted slides, attempts have begun to group together responses that are implicitly similar or appear to occupy a similar space (for example, 'learning' would exist within an educational space whereas 'navigating the social world' would sit within a personal/social space).

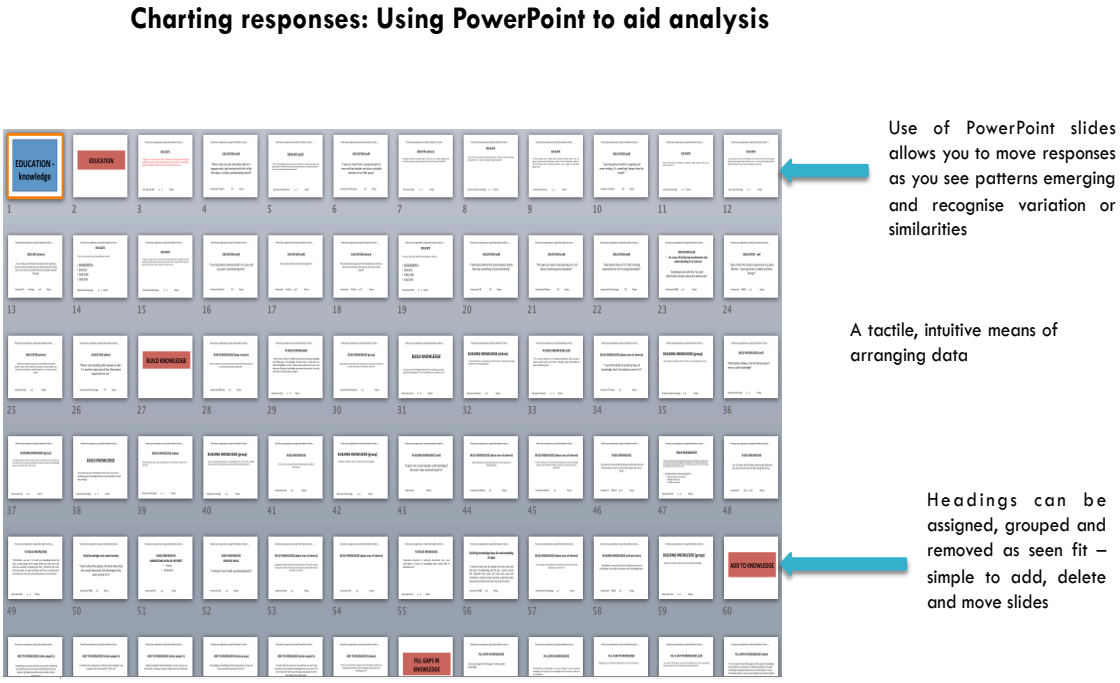


Figure 3.4 – Charting responses

As an aid to the use of PowerPoint, this study utilised Microsoft Excel as a way in which to assist with charting responses and grouping them together based on similarity and difference. While they both have the same purpose, they offer two different tools for organising the research data and provide visually different ways in which to see what it is that is developing during the analysis process. The similarity and difference between the two tools can be seen in Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.5.

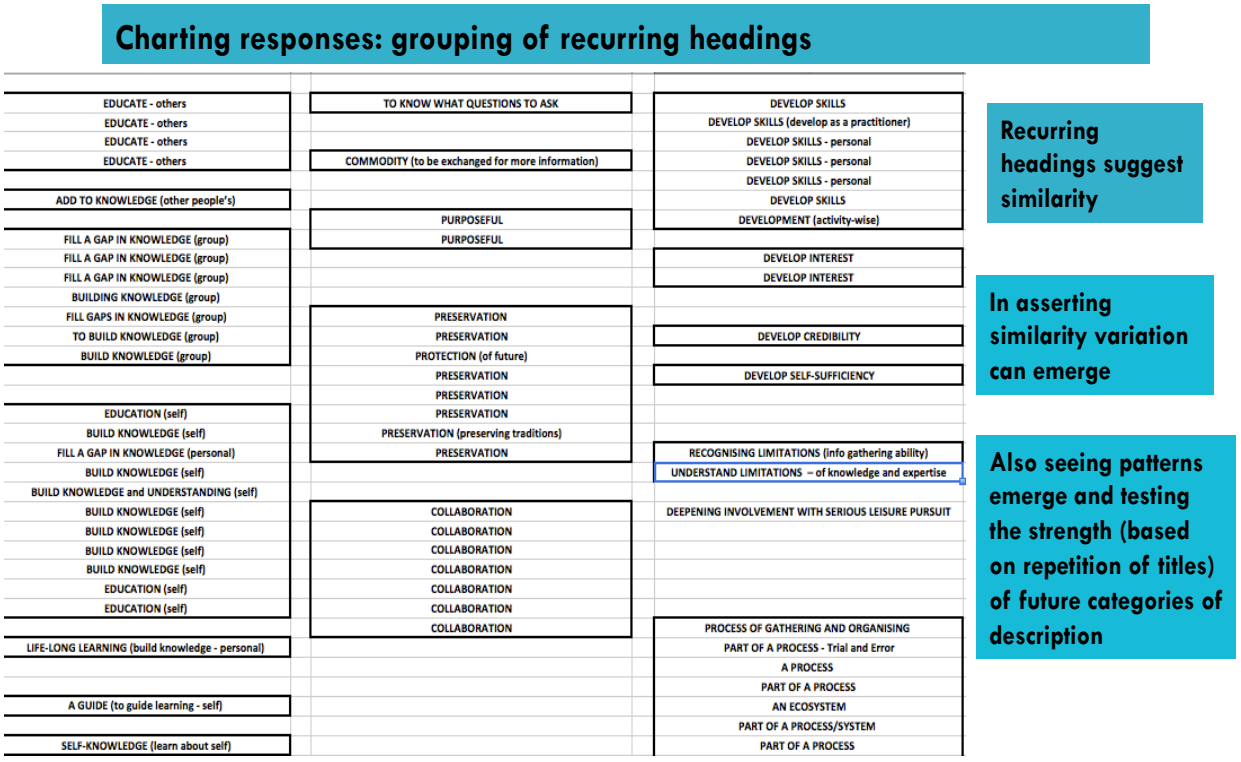


Figure 3.5 – Grouping of recurring headings

After that initial charting has taken place further refinement of the titles will occur. How that transpires will depend on the researcher conducting the analysis (a choice that further connects the researcher to both the data and the analysis process). However, within this

study the process undertaken was to group recurring headings and then to tentatively arrange those groups based on similarity. In asserting similarity we allow variation to emerge. Indeed, it may be easier for an inexperienced phenomenographer (or even an experienced one) to begin by looking for those elements that are similar, rather than searching for variation. Variation may be subtle or, at this early stage of analysis, it may be difficult to pinpoint. Similarity, however, is more apparent and, therefore, easier to grasp and isolate.

Further refinement of the model will continue, as can be seen and it is through that process the researcher becomes more enmeshed in and familiar with their data. That proves beneficial when the categories of description and the dimensions of variation need to be established. Having moved through a process wherein they were required to fully understand their data set - looking at each piece in relation to each other, grouping and arranging it, adding to and subtracting from it - they arrive at the point of creating categories of description with a strong understanding of the relationships, scope and variation which exists within their data. Although creating the categories of description (CofD) is a process unto itself, they will have, necessarily, challenged themselves to uncover the key ingredients that make up the CofD, namely variation both dimensionally and categorically.

As can be seen in Figure 3.6 the process of refinement continues through until such a time when all of the variation regarding responses to the research question have been exhausted and a limited set of headings have been arrived at. Those headings, although

they may well change, essentially represent the final categories of description. As shown in Figure 3.7, the headings have been refined down to the point where they can be grouped under a smaller number of umbrella headings.

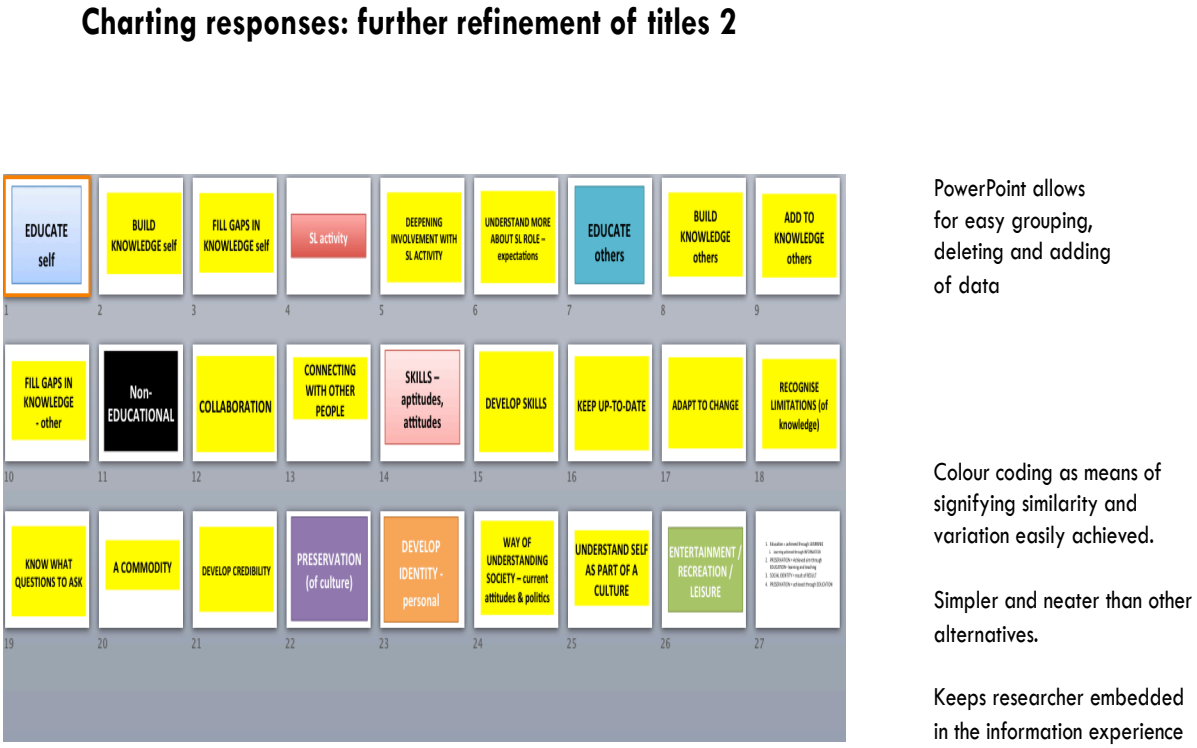


Figure 3.6 – refining the titles

Those headings are considerably more specific than they had been at earlier stages of analysis. The table includes a number of 'title cards' (the non-yellow slides) and those show marked progression towards what will ultimately become the final categories of description. However, as can be seen by the number of 'title cards' there is still more analysis which needed to take place. Further analysis, which involved going back to look at the data that had prompted those headings, would see several merged together under the one banner. That is another of the benefits inherent in the system used within this

research. At each level of refinement the researcher is made very aware of what is and is not clearly defined. Those elements that lack clarity are re-visited and re-examined to see if they can be made more concrete. As the researcher has at their disposal an ongoing record of the analysis process they can refer back to it in order to see how they interpreted those headings to begin with and can question the decisions they made.

3.8.3 Final Step

The final stage of analysis resulted in four key headings being assigned to the data. They can be seen in Figure 3.7 and while they do not represent the actual categories of description, as outlined elsewhere in this thesis, they do very closely approximate them.

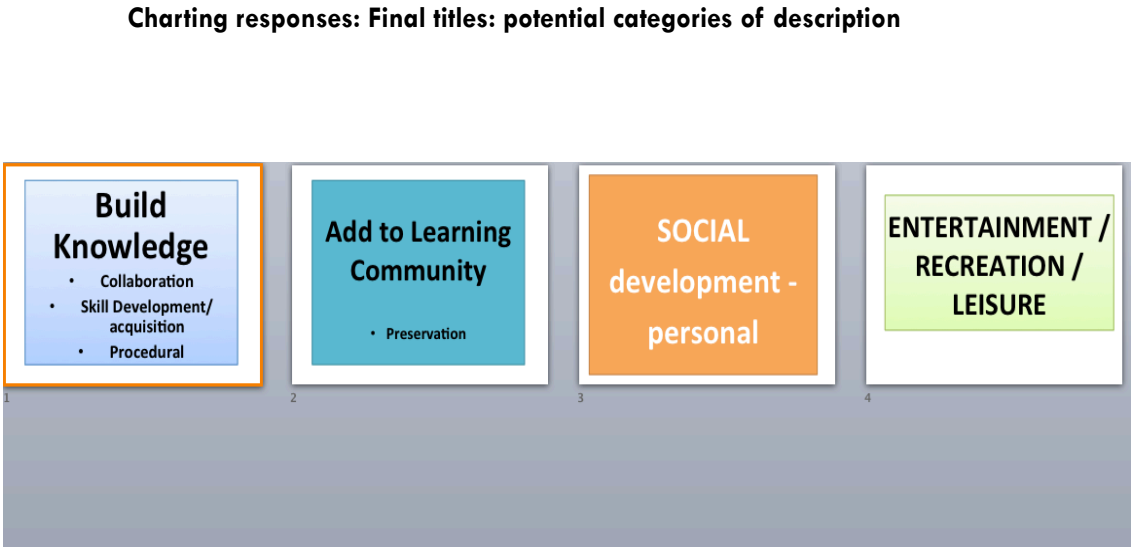


Figure 3.7 - Final stage of analysis

When this method of data analysis was devised it was not anticipated that the end result would be the creation of potential categories. On the contrary, the aim was only to devise

a way in which to organise the data extracted from the interviews. However, as the process evolved it became apparent that not only did it allow for the organisation of extracted data but it also provided the means by which data analysis could lead seamlessly into establishing the categories of description. At each stage throughout the analysis process the data was rearranged, reorganized and re-evaluated against both the research question and against the other units of data. Not only did variation emerge in an organic fashion but so too did the logical relationships which exist between the data, both singularly and as clusters/groups. Those logical relationships would, in turn, form the basis of the categories of description. Indeed, if the four titles that emerged during the data analysis phase, as shown in Figure 3.7 are compared to the eventual categories of description ('Acquiring new information', 'Helping the learning community', 'Developing Personal Awareness' and 'Entertainment') it will be apparent how invaluable this process of data analysis was.

While the process outlined in this chapter does not change in any way the nature of phenomenography it does provide a blueprint that can be followed when conducting preliminary data analysis. It does need to be reiterated, however, that the process outlined does not provide as a means by which the awareness structures can be established. That step within the data analysis process is necessarily separate. However, in the absence of any published materials that make clear how the researcher can extract, organise and make sense of their data this does represent a contribution. It provides an easy-to-follow outline for anyone new to phenomenography and it can also be used by experienced phenomenographers looking for a convenient and simple way in which to undertake data

analysis. It also provides the means by which the data analysis process can be preserved for either future use (in presentations or to defend the logical integrity of the choices made by the researcher).

3.9 Maintaining Quality

This section of the thesis deals with the issues of validity and reliability in regard to the research design, analysis of research data and subsequent outcomes of the research process. Questions regarding trustworthiness, reliability and validity have often been raised in relation to phenomenographic studies due to its interpretivist nature (Saljo, 1981, 1991,). Chief among those criticisms is the contentions that while phenomenographic studies purport to show the experiential relationship of subject (interviewee) to object (the phenomenon in question) they, in reality, only divulge the relationship of the interviewer to the interviewee (Saljo, 1994; Saljo & Wyndhamn, 1987). Sandberg (1994) states that a phenomenographic study must provide a faithful reading of the object under examination. He also suggests that validity and reliability are two key notions that ensure the trustworthiness of data analysis conducted within and conclusions drawn during a phenomenographic study (Sandberg, 2005). The following sections outline the ways in which validity and reliability are enacted within a body of phenomenographic inquiry and explain how they were dealt with in this research project.

3.9.1 Reliability

In regard to the method of data analysis that has been proposed in this research there is a

certain implication for phenomenography as a field. Since its inception in the early 1980's there has been general discomfort with the replicability of results generated within a phenomenographic study. The argument is that data generated only accounts for the relationship that exists between the interviewer and their interview subjects but does not fully account for the experiential relationship that exists between the subject and the phenomenon in question (Edwards, 2005; Saljo, 1997; Saljo & Wyndhamn, 1987). As a result the findings cannot be adequately replicated (by any other parties) because they are dependent on that original interviewer-interviewee relationship. Lacking replicability, which is considered within the social sciences to be the "common criterion for measuring the extent to which the research results are reliable" (Sandberg, 1997, p.2004), they can be seen to lack credibility, validity and reliability. While it can't be expected that the original findings can be re-discovered, *in toto*, outside of their original context, there is the expectation that the categories that emerge will approximate those generated by other researchers when studying the same data (Sandberg, 1997).

In response to that concern, a method called 'interjudge agreement' has been suggested (Johansson, Marton & Svensson, 1985; Marton, 1986; Saljo, 1988; Bowden 1999). Interjudge agreement (or interjudge reliability) is, essentially, a system wherein more than one researcher works on data analysis but in two distinct stages. While one principle researcher proposes the categories of description the remaining researchers or 'co-judges' check the data (as used by the principle researcher) against the suggested categories of description. It is a measurement tool in which "reliability is measured in term of percentage agreement with the original researcher's classification. The greater the

percentage agreement, the higher the reliability is considered to be" (Sandberg, 1997, p.205). However, the trustworthiness of interjudge reliability has been brought into question (Theman, 1993; Booth, 1992, Alexandersson, 1994) by critics who feel it does not approximate the complexity which may be found during data analysis when dealing with conceptions that are not clearly obvious to those researchers who are one step removed from the principle phase of data analysis (Sandberg, 1997). Certainly, one of the problems with interjudge agreement is that its claim of reliability is based on the imposition of a system (of multiple researchers checking each others work) but cannot be proven by way of any analytic artifacts.

The system proposed in this research suggests that a way around the issue relating to reliability might be what is called within this research 'verifiability'. The process can be shown in regard to the steps taken and the decisions made. The outcome of data analysis is not the only data that is available under this system. On the contrary, the 'workings' are available if the researcher needs to show the validity and reliability of the decisions they made during the analysis phase. In showing those workings, if another researcher can look at them and follow the logic that led from one step (or decision) to the next then it can be suggested that the decisions made are logical and, therefore, reliable. Interjudge reliability is based on the acceptance that a multi-researcher process has taken place. Verifiability doesn't rely on those assumptions. On the contrary, it presents its logical process as the means by which it is accepted or rejected.

While the method of analysis proposed in this research does not provide a solution to that

discord it does offer a way in which researchers can work around such a complex issue. According to Marton (1986) the initial uncovering of the categories of description is a form of discovery and discovery does not have to be replicable. However, once the discovery has been made it must be possible for others to recognise and acknowledge their presence or absence. Saljo (1988) also suggests that the original locating of categories occurs within a space called the *context of discovery* wherein the original findings, once uncovered, cannot be expected to be found in precisely the same fashion again possibly even by the original researcher. However, the categories, which emerge from that original research, should remain recognizable to other researchers and not appear that they have been devised by any factors which are so specific to the original study that they should have been removed by a process of bracketing (Saljo, 1988).

The argument against Saljo's (1988) position would be that every time a different person encounters and is able to recognise the categories for the first time they are engaging in a process of discovery. While they are not discovering something unique to all people they are discovering something unique to themselves. That being the case, the path that can be taken towards discovery should be nearly as important as the discovery itself. If the researcher is able to provide that path, for others, then those people will be able to engage in a similar *context of discovery*. That being the case and failing to achieve replicability, a workable substitute could what this research calls ***verifiability***.

Within the method of data analysis employed during this study the researcher is required to follow several logical steps beginning with transcription of interviews through to the

point at which categories of description are established. In making those steps overt and placing them within a format (Excel and PowerPoint) which can be easily presented I have proposed a way in which the researcher show the logical flow of their analysis if need be. No other researcher is required to check the work in order for categories of description and dimensions of variation to be established. However, should the need arise, they will be able to present, if required, the logical flow of their analysis process. While it retains its qualitative essence, it is not unlike a mathematician providing the logical path of their work or an engineer showing the logical flow of their design. Ultimately, if validity and reliability are of importance and no agreement can be reached on a uniform means by which to ensure replicability then verifiability, in which the researchers flow of logic is given precedence, could offer a potential alternative.

3.9.2 Validity

In regard to validity as it applies to a phenomenographic study the basic 'test' is that the way in which the interviewees experienced the phenomenon in question is represented in the outcome space. Bruce (1997) suggests that phenomenographic reliability is shown when there is "a demonstrable orientation towards the phenomenon... a conformity to the knowledge interest of the research... and communicability of the results (Bruce, 1997, p.210). However, that contention could just as easily be applied to phenomenographic validity. Two types of validity, communicative and pragmatic, are most commonly applied to phenomenographic studies (Sandberg, 2005; Akerlind, 2005) although in this study, transgressive validity is given more prominence. Of those three approaches, pragmatic validity focuses on the "possible discrepancies between what people say they

do and what they actually do" (Sandberg, 2005, p.56). It can be achieved by asking follow-up questions which seek to ground the statements made by interviewees questions in concrete examples such as ' can you give an example', 'such as what', 'how do you', 'can you describe a time when'. Communicative validity presupposes that an understanding exists between the researcher and the subject matter the research subjects are engaged with (Sandberg, 2005; Apel, 1972). Transgressive validity deals with the acceptance of a reality that does not conform to that which is considered to be 'the norm'. It can occur when gender or socio-cultural factors affect the way in which a phenomenon is understood and experienced. Rather than be experienced in a way that is consistent with the dominant paradigm they are experienced in a different but equally valid fashion (Sandberg, 2005).

In order to fit within Sandberg's criteria of validity, the researcher in this project arrived at each interview with a strong understanding of the key research principles and a familiarity with the area in which each interviewee is operating. Follow-up questions were used to ground the respondent's answers in concrete situations. In addition, there was no expectation that the responses given were representative of any one paradigm or that any response outside of 'the norm' was invalid and not able to be included in the study.

Transgressive and communicative validity are really the hallmarks of an evenly balanced and solidly constructed study. Rather than being methodological constructs they simply show that a study has not been weighted down by any biases outside those that are

consistent with the aims of the study itself. According to Sandberg (2005), *communicative validity* is achieved by establishing a community of interpretation (Apel, 1972) in which an understanding exists between the researcher and the research participants (Sandberg, 2005). In regard to this study, that community of interpretation could be seen as having been established during the pre-interview phase. At that point a dialogue was established between the researcher and the potential research subjects in which the research aims were discussed and an outline of the research process made known.

Similarly, the interviews themselves (both pre-interviews and main interviews) were conducted by way of a dialogue between the researcher and the research subjects. As is explained earlier in this chapter, potential interviewees were engaged in a preliminary discussion to ascertain whether or not they were actually engaged in a serious leisure activity. That discussion was opted for, rather than using a formal devise such as a checklist or quiz, as it was felt that an informal dialogue would create a more congenial atmosphere between the interviewer and interviewee. However, it was also based on Gadamer's suggestion that with genuine two-way dialogue, the process of question and answer is the essential way in which people develop understanding (Gadamer, 1960, 1994; Sandberg, 2005). If the interviewee had any problems with the question posed they could, through dialogue with the interviewer, establish meaning which was satisfactory to both parties. In the absence of dialogue there is the risk that interpretation will develop in a way that is not necessarily commensurate with the question's original intent. As communicative validity stresses shared understanding between the respective parties (in this case, interviewer and interviewee) dialogue was the most appropriate method to use.

Another element that belongs with communicative validity but does not seem to appear in the available literature deals with what this study terms '***discursive validity'***. What that refers to is the commensurability of the discourse that takes place between the interviewer and the interviewee. In communicative validity what is important is the element of dialogue. In discourse validity, on the other hand, while dialogue is still important, what is of equal significance relates to the way in which that dialogue is framed. It is of no value if the interviewer and interviewee are not conducting their dialogue within an agreed upon and shared communicative space. As an example, if the interviewer was speaking in one language and the interviewee was speaking in another that required translation, there could be a problem with validity, as the ability of the interviewer and interviewee to communicate (to engage in discourse) with one another would be significantly compromised. Similarly, if the worldview of one participant was at odds with that of the other their ability to communicate would be compromised and the subsequent results of their interview would be prone to issues regarding validity and reliability. To that end, there needs to be a shared discursive 'space' in which both parties can engage in the process of communication which would allow for communicative validity.

In the case of this study, the questions posed to the interviewees were not shrouded in some form of language that would potentially alienate the interviewees. They were neutral in regard to gender, age, religion or other potentially contentious areas. The interview itself was conducted in a similar fashion and the discourse that ensued was not couched in language that might be inflammatory or insensitive to any of the interviewees.

As a result, the discourse that ensued (during the interviews) was able to remain open and free of any unnecessary restraint on the part of the interviewees. Similarly, the interviews did not privilege any one worldview over another. As an example, a female interviewee was able to respond to any of the interview questions and engage equally in the interview discourse, as she was not made to feel that the interview was a male-centric construct that prohibited her from genuinely engaging with and answering the questions, as they did not allow for any representation by her gender. In the case of a multi-cultural cohort (which did not feature in this study), those concerns would have been equally valid.

Alongside communicative and discursive validity another criteria used within this study for assessing and justifying the veracity of the analysed data is ***transgressive validity***. It assists in dealing with "various forms of ambiguity, complexity, and multiplicity in the lived experience investigated" (Sandberg, 2005, p.57) and is particularly relevant to the decisions made regarding the complexion of the interview cohort. As is explained during a later stage of the thesis, the decision was made to ensure that the selected interviewees were representative, in regard to gender and of the broader community. While certain omissions needed to be made regarding the age groups represented they were consistent with the needs of the study and the research domain it examined (Serious Leisure). However, most significantly, equal numbers of male and female participants were selected. Not only did that mark a departure from previous serious leisure studies it ensured that in subverting the accepted paradigm for serious leisure research in which the female experience and voice was not represented it asserted its claims to validity by way of its inclusiveness. As this study focussed on the experience of serious leisure

participants in general who were operating within the arena of 'heritage' there could be no justification for not providing both genders with equal representation. To do so would have not only weakened the study's ability to speak to and for serious leisure as a whole but would have drawn into question the validity of the results it generated and reported.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has described in detail the research methodology adopted by and utilised within this study. It began by providing an explanation as to the choices that needed to be made when selecting a methodology and the rationale that dictated why phenomenography was selected for use within this study. It then provided an overview of phenomenography and its variations, including a discussion relating to its ontological and epistemological considerations. Phenomenography's conceptual framework was presented alongside a description of its key features, the key stages that occur within a phenomenographic study and the way in which it was applied within this research. The research design was discussed at length including a proposed method of conducting data analysis within a phenomenographic study – something that is unique to and has emerged from this particular study. The chapter concludes with an examination of the way in which rigor was applied within this study, in regard to the reliability and validity of the research approach, data analysis and data production. The chapter that follows describes in detail the findings to have emerged within this study.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the findings of this study. Its purpose is to describe the qualitatively different ways in which people engaged in a serious leisure activity (as all participants in this study were) experience information literacy. Each of those qualitatively different ways is assigned one unique category of description. That category is explained at length regarding its referential and structural aspects along with a detailed analysis of the dimensions of variation that were found to be in evidence within it. The chapter concludes with a tabulation and explanation of the outcome space created by the relationship that exists between all four categories of description.

4.2 Categories of description: An overview

After analysis of the interview data it was possible to establish four distinct categories of description relating to the way/s in which serious leisure participants experience using information to learn. Those categories are:

1. Acquiring new information
2. Helping the learning community
3. Developing personal awareness
4. Entertainment

Those categories of description articulate the qualitatively different ways in which the interview cohort experienced the phenomenon in question. They are "based on

comparison and grouping of data representing expressions of conceptions. The categories are not general characterisations of the conceptions but forms of expressing the conceptions" (Svensson 1997, p.168) and their purpose is to represent the conceptions derived from working across the whole group with each category representing one distinct conception.

Within this study the phenomenon in question is information literacy and the research cohort are serious leisure participants operating within the sphere designated as heritage. Phenomenography provides the means of identifying the select number of qualitatively different ways in which a phenomenon might be experienced. The individual voice, while present during the interview stage, gives way to a collective consciousness and 'group voice' wherein the individual 'person' is replaced by the 'unique variation'. That which is unique (for the purposes of this study) is no longer the individual person but, rather, the variation which exists between individuals. However, it is important to understand that not every participant in the study experienced information literacy in each of the four ways. Some participants experienced it in one way, some in another way and some, yet again, in a wholly different fashion. As a result, the four categories presented here represent the critically and qualitatively different ways in which the interview cohort as a whole experienced information literacy.

4.3 Categories of description

Each category will be described in regard to both **meaning** and **structure of awareness.** The **meaning** or referential element of awareness deals with the meaning embedded within a person's awareness when they experience a particular phenomenon. Meaning is

constructed by the individual as the phenomenon they are experiencing becomes distinct from and clearly defined against its contextual surrounds (Marton, 2000). The ability to discern those features of an experience that will allow for meaning to be ascribed is dependent on the individual's experience of variation (Marton, 2000). Variation enables the individual to experience an entity as distinct from other phenomena that will, in turn, allow them to ascribe a unique meaning to a unique experience. The **structure of awareness** represents those elements resident in the foreground and background of a person's awareness. Each category, in this study there are four, represents a unique structure of awareness which is formed and made real by those dimensions of variation (Marton & Booth, 1997, p.108). The structure of awareness includes the **focus,** the **background** and the **margin.**

Of those elements, the **focus** refers to those things that are the object/subject of our clearest concentration, whose function and form are all clearly defined within and by our awareness and understanding of them. The focus refers to the thematic core of a person's awareness and is central to the individual's awareness and experience of a phenomenon. The focus emerges from the individual's total awareness of their experience of a phenomenon (Booth, 1992) but consists of one particular aspect with which the individual has engaged (Edwards, 2005). Those elements directly related to the phenomenon are considered to be within the 'internal horizon' of a person's awareness (Marton & Booth, 1997) and, therefore, constitute their focus. The **background** is that portion of awareness which is related to the object/subject in focus and which informs our understanding of the focal object but which is not as sharply and clearly defined. It refers to those parts of the individual's experience of a phenomenon which are clearly discerned

but do not occupy their central focus (Booth, 1992). The **margin,** while related to the focal object/subject sits just outside our perceptual awareness as to be an absent presence within our perceptual awareness. Just as the background represents those elements of experience (of a phenomenon) which are clearly defined but not the individual's central focus, the margin refers to those other elements that, while they may be relevant, do not form part of the individual's delineation of the phenomenon at hand.

It can be that at times a margin cannot be identified. In those instances the integrity of the categories remains intact; however, what sits outside perceptual awareness is not distinct enough to be included in discussion. That can be seen in both categories one and two. In neither case was it clear as to what elements would reside within the margin. In regard to category one, the participant's level of awareness appears to be particularly broad. In so doing it brings in to focus elements involving themselves, their serious leisure topic and the social world. Subsequently, with such a breadth and high level of awareness it is difficult to see what elements may have slipped just outside of their perception.

Similarly, regarding category two, no margin could be clearly identified. It is possible that with the focus being on sharing information with the learning community an assumption is being made (by the individual) that the learning community welcomes or needs their contribution. If what is in focus represents the individual's intent (both altruistic and egoistic) then it is possible that what sits outside their focus is clouded by their belief that action, on their part, is warranted and necessary. Regardless, that position remains unclear and, as such, no margin is recorded for either category or included within the final table of results (Figure 4.1).

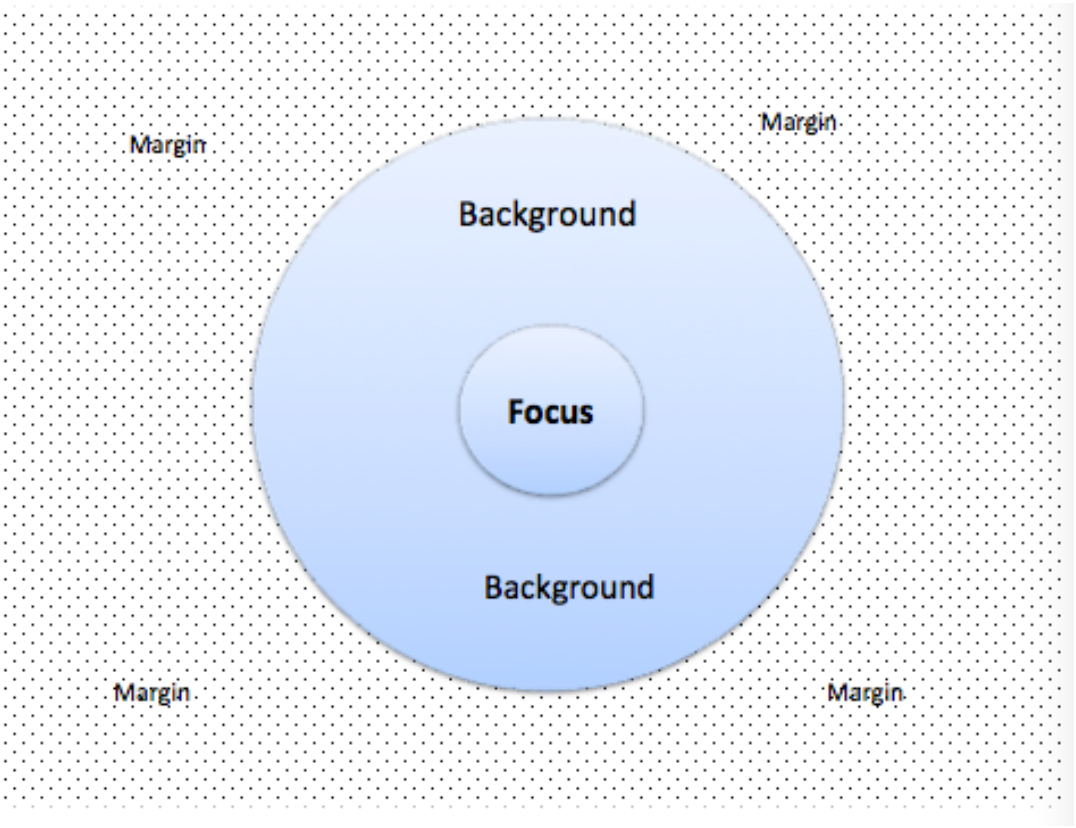


Figure 4.1- Fields of awareness: focus, background and margin.

It is possible for an individual to see a phenomenon in different ways at different times, depending upon the circumstances in which the phenomenon is encountered. That occurs when certain elements/aspects of the phenomenon are more, or less, clearly defined within a person's field of awareness (Akerlind, 2005; Marton, 1994a; Marton and Ming Fai, 1999; Marton and Booth, 1997; Bowden and Marton, 1998). Subsequently, those elements or aspects can be seen as **dimensions of variation** occurring within the overall structure of experiencing the phenomenon in question. Therefore, when examining a phenomenon it is possible to discuss it not only in terms of the categories of description and outcome space but also in regard to the variation which occurs in the way each category experiences a particular aspect of the phenomenon in question. That provides a picture of the similarities and differences between the categories and paves the way for a

more detailed understanding of the interrelationships that exist between each category (Akerlind, 2002a, p.4).

Within this study, **three dimensions of variation** have been identified. They are:

1. Experienced Identity
2. Information
3. Learning

Experienced identity is a way of seeing oneself in relation to a particular context. It is not alien to the individual but is, rather, organically representative of their experience of a phenomenon.

Information provides the building blocks for learning. Information may be verbal, textual, visual, tacit or abstract. Information is not restricted by anything other than the individual's ability or willingness to constitute it as information. The only requirement of information is that it informs the person engaging with it. Therefore, what is considered to be information by one person may not be considered such by another.

Learning, within this study, is considered to be something which occurs when, after engaging with information, the individual achieves a state in which their understanding of a particular situation, entity or phenomenon is more complex and nuanced than it had been prior to their engaging in that experience. What is learned is not relevant, except to the individual. All that is of concern is that after an engagement with information (in whichever form they constitute it) the individual has attained a state of understanding more advanced or developed than their previous state.

The following section will use those elements described here to present and explain each of the four categories that were identified during the course of data analysis.

4.3.1 Category 1: Acquiring new information

4.3.1.1 Referential aspect (Meaning)

In this category, the information literacy experience is one of skill and knowledge acquisition. New information relating directly to the respondent's serious leisure (SL) activity is added to their existing knowledge base. In so doing, the person is able to fill gaps in their serious leisure education, keep in touch with new developments within their serious leisure area of interest, deepen involvement with their serious leisure activity and progress (in stature as well as expertise) as a participant within its unique community. As one interviewee stated, *"Our knowledge isn't inexhaustible so we're always trying to fill in the gaps and build up our supply of new knowledge and information. If our only information is old we'll go stale, new is fresh and it gives us momentum" (Interviewee 14, p.6)*. That indicates the dynamic nature of information and its significance to the interviewees as a means by which they can keep themselves invigorated personally as well as professionally ('profession' relating to the career aspect of their serious leisure activity). As well as acquiring new facts, data, understandings and insights into their specific serious leisure activity, they build a repertoire of skills and aptitudes directly related to the management, access and dissemination of information. Those new skills and aptitudes enable the person to use information tools and techniques that had previously been unavailable to them. In acquiring those skills and aptitudes they increase

their ability to access and manage a wider range of information that will, in turn, allow them to further develop their knowledge base.

The experience of information literacy is multi-faceted. There is the pure serious leisure application wherein information and skills acquired by the individual relate to or are used specifically for the pursuit of their serious leisure activity. However, on the other hand, when information literacy is experienced it is as a result of the individual's personal drive for skills and knowledge to assist in the pursuit of their serious leisure activity: *"You want to fill the gaps in your own knowledge base, learn new things so that you continue to move forward as an informed person" (Int. 18, p.7).* Again, that illustrates the place information plays in the on-going personal growth of the individual as well as its importance to their leisure activity.

There is also another more universal element to their information literacy experience. In that instance, the information and skills the respondents acquire are used for more than simply operating within their serious leisure community. Instead, they enable the individual to function on a communal, societal and human level. They inform them about matters beyond their serious leisure interest and they connect them to others who do not share that particular interest. While their focus within this category may be on becoming the most accomplished serious leisure participant they possibly can, when they discuss information and using information to learn it is not only in terms of their serious leisure activity. As one respondent noted, *"Everything in the world is information, I can't just choose to only recognise the things that related to my hobbies. Information is in everything I do and I just distill it, one pile for my hobby and another pile for just day to*

day life that doesn't relate to my hobby" (Int. 19, p.4). Similarly, from another interviewee, *"There's no doubting that when I use information it's a way of adapting to changes in attitudes and ways of doing things. Information isn't inert, it's living and that makes it the best response to changes in attitudes, behaviours and skills" (Int. 19, p.8).* Those quotes illustrate the way in which information, for the interviewees, is multi-faceted as well as dynamic. Rather than seeing information in some singular fashion – such as textual, visual, oral, tacit or abstract - the respondents constituted it as having limitless potential. However, they do acknowledge that some delineation is made, between their everyday life and that of their serious leisure activity.

Within this category there is a symbiotic relationship, of sorts, that exists between the acquisition of skills-based knowledge and information, which directly relates to the serious leisure topic at its most atomic level. While the learning of new skills may differ in content from the learning of new information about the serious leisure topic itself they are both equal partners in a person's development of their knowledge base. As new knowledge is required (to fill a knowledge gap), new techniques may be needed in order to access that data. Subsequently, the acquisition of one necessitates the acquisition of the other. However, in learning new skills the person is not necessarily learning anything about their serious leisure topic per se. Similarly, in acquiring new information about their SL activity they may not require any new skills be learned. In each case, however, the person is directed towards the primary focus of the category, which is to become a better, more proficient and more effective serious leisure practitioner: *"I've got things I don't know so information helps bridge those gaps for me and makes me a better practitioner of my art" (Int. 13, p.7).*

4.3.1.2 Structural aspect: Focus, background & margin

Focus

Within this category the focus is on acquiring new information that will help the individual become a more capable, better-informed and more expert serious leisure practitioner: *"You want to fill the gaps in your own knowledge base, learn new things so that you continue to move forward as an informed person" (Int. 18, p.7).* In other words, their aim is to increase all information-related areas that relate to their proficiency as a serious leisure practitioner. Those areas include their knowledge base, understanding of their serious leisure activity it's scope, boundaries, rules and other constituent elements and their skill set (related to the pursuit of their serious leisure activity).

While information literacy does extend beyond the world of the person's serious leisure activity, their focus in acquiring new information and skills is firmly on developing themselves as serious leisure practitioners. As one interviewee said, *"Using information to learn means finding out new things...New information and new skills equal me being better at what I do and more relevant and valuable and respected in this field" (Int. 10, p.4).* That development requires the acquisition of new data and the learning of new skills all of which will be utilised for the primary function of advancing the person's serious leisure 'career'. In other words, while there may be ancillary benefits from the information literacy experience, outside of those that relate directly to the serious leisure activity, it is that activity which provides the motivational force behind the person's becoming information literate.

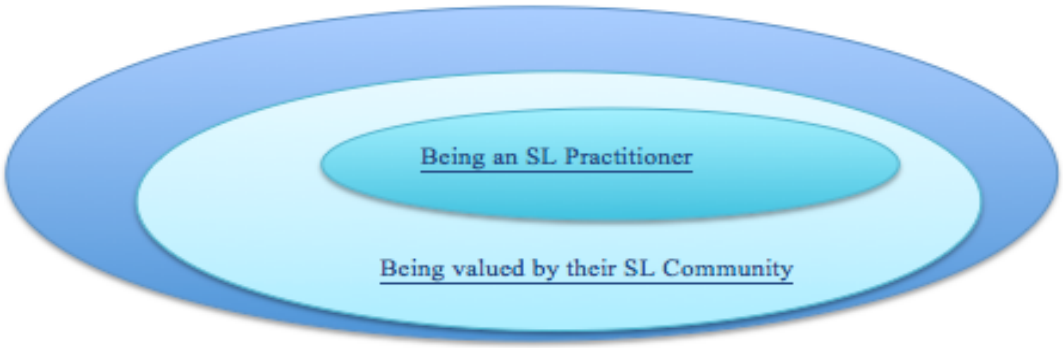
Background

Within this category and as can be seen in Figure 4.2 the focus is on the individual becoming a better-informed and more expert serious leisure practitioner – something that is achieved through acquiring new information. However, what sits in the background is the notion of being judged as a valuable member of the learning community. Interviewees noted that, *"It's nice to be valuable to other people and considered someone worth dealing with because you know a lot of things others don't. Information lets me be that person." (Int. 18, p.7) and, "The more information you gather up the deeper you get into this whole area and the deeper it lets you go into being a strong player in this community" (Int. 8, p.12).* That concept of 'worth' or importance to the learning community, while it isn't the central focus of the category, does play a significant part in their experience of both using information to learn and functioning within their unique learning community. It is also worth noting that the emphasis, as illustrated by those quotes, is on the individual gaining something (value to the learning community) not giving something to another party or adding to their experience of the leisure activity. It is a self-centered approach that foreshadows their attitude in other categories.

The person focuses on becoming better informed (about their serious leisure area) and on developing more advanced technical skills, which will allow them to more effectively acquire information. The principle aim is to know more about the serious leisure topic. The principle intention is to become a better serious leisure participant by knowing more about the serious leisure activity. Part of the aim is to more deeply engage with the topic. Therefore, the topic itself exists within the background of the individual's awareness.

What is missing, however, is an understanding of who the person is appealing to for their validation as a better serious leisure participant. The person is aware of that authoritarian figure; however, it is not articulated. Are they the figure, or is it an external agent? It is, in part, the former, but more generally, it is the latter. They do not seek to acquire information to become a better serious leisure practitioner because of that external agent or because they seek validation from the agent (or agency). However, it is an element of their desire to improve themselves as serious leisure practitioners. Therefore, the notion of judgement by an external agent sits in the background rather than at the very margin of their awareness.

Figure 4.2 (below) depicts the structure of awareness for this category



4.3.1.3 DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION:

Experienced Identity

When a person is engaged in an experience with information literacy it may be while pursuing their serious leisure activity. In those instances their experience of information literacy will be determined by their role as a serious leisure participant. Similarly, when a person is engaged in their everyday life activities (as part of the social world) their

experience of information literacy is determined by their role as a participant within the everyday social world. Therefore, it can be said that in this first category there are two 'modes of being' that the individual can (or will) engage with in regard to their information seeking/information literacy experience. Within this study those 'modes of being' are constituted as 'experienced identity'. An 'experienced identity' differs from a 'role' in that a role is a behaviour artificially adopted by or imposed upon an individual which determines the way in which that individual experiences any given phenomenon. 'Experienced identity', on the other hand emerges naturally from the experience an individual has of a particular phenomenon. It is not alien to the individual but is, rather, organically representative of their experience of a phenomenon.

The first of those two experienced identities is that of a serious leisure participant. In that instance the person's experience of information literacy is coloured by their serious leisure pursuit, its rules, requirements, expectations and the 'social world' that is constructed around it. The information they seek and subsequently choose to acquire will be directed towards their serious leisure activity - informing and guiding their pursuit, developing their attitude towards it as well as keeping them up-to-date with any changes or advances which may have occurred or will occur within their particular field. There is a general neglect of or willingness to overlook information that is not directly related to their serious leisure activity: *"When I'm doing this activity I only see the information that revolves around what I'm into. Things that don't relate to it I just seem to pass over or ignore" (Int. 11, p.6).*

That willingness to focus solely on their leisure activity also extends to the evaluation of

information as either good or bad, depending on the way in which it relates to the serious leisure activity. If they rate it as 'bad', then they acknowledge an unwillingness to engage with it in any capacity: *"When I'm in the zone and focusing on this then I shut out everything which doesn't relate to it. Information is only as good as it helps me learn about what I'm doing. If it doesn't help, it's not worth bothering with" (Int. 10,p.5).* Within a certain context, therefore, information is good or bad, helpful or unhelpful in so far as it advances their serious leisure activity. That is not to say they are incapable of seeing a context in which information can cross the boundaries between their serious leisure activity and their everyday life. On the contrary they do believe that the context is what drives their attitude: *"Sometimes I think about information as a general thing that relates to all parts of my life and sometimes I only think about information if it has to do with my entertainment. I think you wear two hats, but never at the same time" (Int.17, p.6).* However, it is significant to note that even though they are able to appreciate information's potentiality (as something which can operate in two contexts) they are strict about it only operating in one context at a time.

The second identity they may experience is that of 'information seeker'. While they also seek information in their experienced identity as a serious leisure practitioner, the distinction is that in this second experienced identity they do not necessarily have any one specific aim that guides their selection or evaluation of information pursuant to a specific theme or topic. Rather, they may either have no conscious aim or may have multiple aims at the same moment. That openness to a wide variety of information could be seen as typical of a person operating within the sphere of 'everyday' life. Indeed, that attitude comes through very clearly in quotes such as: *"Information is part of being a person out*

in the real world. There's a whole lot more information I process and understand than what deals just with this activity" (Int.16, p.8). Unlike the first identity, there is no desire to limit information to only those things that are seen to benefit their everyday life. On the contrary, the approach is more holistic and relaxed. Interviewees understand the importance of information to their day-to-day life but they are missing the dismissive tone that characterized their attitude in the first identity. Instead, they speak of information as something alive and necessary: *"There's no doubting that when I use information it's a way of adapting to changes in attitudes and ways of doing things. Information isn't inert, it's living and that makes it the best response to changes in attitudes, behaviours and skills" (Int.19, p.8).* In that situation (the 'everyday') the person engages with a vast range of textual stimuli, signs and symbols that need to be absorbed, processed and understood. In order to navigate their way within through that labyrinth of textual stimuli their information literacy 'field of vision' cannot be narrowly defined by one topic alone.

It should be noted that when we talk about a change in experienced identity what we are really talking about is a change in context. While the information/phenomenon (the text requiring interpretation/the textual experience) itself remains static (it will appear the same regardless of the experienced identity) when the context changes (the context being the circumstances in which the individual experiences the text – in this case as either a serious leisure practitioner or as a person involved with the 'everyday' world) the way in which the text is read will change. Subsequently, when the context changes, the information that is intellectually engaged with by the individual will also change. As a result, when addressing their serious leisure activity and adopting the role of 'Serious

Leisure information Seeker' the person seeks information as both part of a community (learning community) and as an individual: *"It is a personal and a public experience. I develop myself through my experience of using information but I also add to the world by taking data and making it information and putting it back into the world for others"* (Int.6, p.10).

Indeed, as Stebbins' Serious Leisure Taxonomy (Stebbins, 2007) suggests, in the majority of instances a person's serious leisure activity will have sprung from an individual interest in a particular topic, not an interest in a learning community: *"I didn't know anyone else was into this except for me. Had no idea there was even a big group of them all over the world either. Wouldn't have cared any way though, I'm not doing it for them I'm doing it for me"* (Int.15, p.6). In certain cases they may never belong to a learning community but will continue to acquire information to satisfy their own personal curiosity, desire to learn and entertainment. That they are genuinely involved in a serious leisure activity is not in question (they fulfill all of the requirements set out by Stebbins). However, they may do so in complete isolation from any other like-minded individuals: *"I know there are other people out there who are into this but I don't reach out to them, I just like to keep this for myself not so I can mingle with other people"* (Int.3, p.9).

That being the case, when acquiring information (the focus of this category) they do so solely from the standpoint of an individual. If, on the other hand, they were part of a learning community it could be suggested that their information seeking activities are coloured by their involvement with that collective: *"Of course you think about other people when you find information or learn how to do things. You're thinking about the*

group and what they need and how we organise ourselves, it's not just information without some purpose or rules, it's got an aim and plan to it" (Int.12, p.6). Indeed, it might be that they seek information that fits within certain parameters already established by the learning community, which will allow them to communicate most effectively with the learning community or which will enable them to attain a certain outcome (for example, status or influence) in relation to the learning community. In that regard their information seeking is more than individualistic.

Information

In this category information is experienced as something that can be utilised to achieve a particular aim. That aim can range from learning a new skill to acquiring new information as the means by which to increase personal knowledge and, thereby deepen the individual's involvement within their serious leisure activity: *"I find I use information to also let me know what my limits are – intellectually, skills-wise, technically"* (Int.18, p.12).

Information is seen as being purposeful and dynamic. There is no 'static' element to information. It is always in motion as something that is being used or, in the case of old information, being classified and referred to in the future: *"Information is alive all the time and it doesn't stand still for anyone, it's only people who stop, information is constantly moving and growing and multiplying and finding new homes and references"* (Int. 21, p.9). Information is always linked to another process. It is the key by which skills can be developed, greater understanding (of life and/or the serious leisure activity) can be achieved, inspiration can be found or status be attained and cemented. It is

purposeful and multi- faceted. It is a source of inspiration. It is a commodity of value that is both a personal possession and a social necessity that is as much a part of everyday life as it is integral to the private world of the individual. It is the genie's magic lamp which, when rubbed, will help them to attain their greatest wish which is, in this category, to become the most capable serious leisure participants possible: *"When we use information or have an experience with information it doesn't just simply give us an answer. What it also does is to make clear things that weren't clear and to help us understand the scope of a topic or the implications of it"* (Int.19, p.11).

There is also an element of self-preservation or survival about the experience of information. In continuing to acquire new information, so that they continue to build their knowledge base and to keep in touch with new developments in the serious leisure community, the individual is also helping him or herself to survive within a world which is dominated by, run by information and reliant upon information: *"Information is the world's life blood isn't it? Without information you don't know anything about how the world works or how to survive in it"* (Int.16, p.9). Information needs to be continually replaced, renewed and reinvigorated. If the person is to become the best serious leisure participant possible they must be up-to-date with all of the new practices, skills, techniques and data relevant to their serious leisure activity. Information allows them to do that. However, in order for it to happen there is a reliance on new information being added to the pre-existing data: *"You want to fill the gaps in your own knowledge base, learn new things so that you continue to move forward as an informed person"* (Int.8, p.6).

Interestingly, the respondents don't always talk about building a knowledge base in relation to achieving a particular goal. While they do often have a purpose in mind, *"I certainly use information to develop an understanding about the area I'm working in and all of its little nuances"* (Int.14, p.3); *"Information helps me to understand the things that stimulate me and helps me to understand the whole field I've found myself most happy in"* (Int.13, p.6) that is not always the case. Indeed, in several instances it appears that building a knowledge base and acquiring new information is a goal in itself. That approach seems very egocentric in that the aim is to satisfy the self by acquiring as much information as possible: *"Is there anything more important than building up my own knowledge banks? I don't think there really is and that's my major information experience"* (Int. 12, p.2). The individual increases their overall level of knowledge and is satisfied until the next time they need to acquire new information.

Given that information appears to always be in a state of flux – continually moving, swirling and agitating – a person can't rest on or be content with what they know in the present or what they have known in the past. They must continue to move forward in acquiring new information: *"You want to fill the gaps in your own knowledge base, learn new things so that you continue to move forward as an informed person"* (Int. 18, p.7). That provides an interestingly circular approach to information and learning, in that the individual acquires new information in order to learn, but what is learned is that new information is needed in order to learn and so on.

Learning

In this category, the attention of the individual is specifically on the individual and the primary concern is education of and learning by the individual. Education/learning is multi-faceted. It takes place not only within the sphere of the individual's serious leisure topic but also in regard to the person's everyday life as a member of society. It also deals with a more introspective type of learning achieved via personal reflection and through which the individual learns about him or herself as a unique entity within the social world. Therefore, learning/education is thought of in terms of what the individual can learn for themselves about themselves, their serious leisure activity and the social world they inhabit: *"Education is key isn't it, that's the big experience for me of using information"* (Int.11, p.8).

Respondents characterised their attitude towards learning as 'filling gaps': *"Our knowledge isn't inexhaustible so we're always trying to fill in the gaps and build our knowledge up"* (Int.15, p.6). It may be that they were filling gaps in personal knowledge, activity-based knowledge or in social knowledge. In each case, however, the focus was on acquiring information in response to a perceived lack of information, skill or understanding as a means of advancing the self as an individual within a social world, engaged with a serious leisure activity or in relation to itself (the introspective 'self'). However, it is not enough to simply say that they become aware of a gap in their knowledge base. While that might be true, the awareness comes via learning. To be aware of a gap in knowledge and a need for new knowledge the person must consciously analyse and measure what they already know (their current levels of knowledge) against

some other entity (a question they cannot answer, a topic they know little or nothing about, a lack of progress in their own serious leisure activity, another person) which will, in turn, show that new information is required. There can also be a tacit understanding that, for some particular reason (prestige, standing within a community, peace of mind) information needs to be current and continually up-dated: *"I can just feel when I'm not up to the minute you know, I just feel out of synch with things so I know I've got to hit the books and learn my way out of that funk"* (Int.18, p.9).

Deepening understanding of the serious leisure pursuit is for personal gain. In this regard it is most closely connected to category four ('Entertainment') where the focus is on self-gratification and pleasure seeking. Learning is concerned with acquisition of skills, of knowledge, of personal satisfaction and a self-assigned level of competency, proficiency or expertise. Part of that experience could be driven by curiosity and the desire to learn more about a chosen field (the serious leisure activity): *"I'm a curious person so I'm always wanting to bulk up what I know and the way to do that is through using information to learn something new"* (Int. 18, p.9). However, there appears to be another element that is not simply related to a person's serious leisure area of interest but to the desire to acquire information for some form of personal gain. If the aim is to be the best serious leisure practitioner possible it could be that the person does not conceive of that aim in regard to the way in which they might impact the serious leisure learning community but the way in which they advance their standing via being judged an 'expert'. The person has questions of his or her own to answer. That doesn't necessarily have anything to do with anyone else: *"That's not forgetting that I also love being able to educate ourselves and being selfish I still think that's the absolute experience of using*

information – to learn for yourself, to educate yourself" (Int. 19, p.5).

The serious leisure activity may be the focus for the person but the desire to deepen involvement with it is desire for personal involvement, not personal contribution. Indeed, participants made no comments regarding improving or contributing to the serious leisure activity or its learning community. On the contrary, they speak exclusively in regard to 'I' and 'me': *"There's also my own education which is I why I got involved with this in the first place, educating myself" (Int.18, p.8).* There is no mention of 'we', which could be expected if they were talking about the serious leisure community. Indeed, there is no mention of a community at all. When there is any mention of entities outside of the 'self' it is done so in regard to how the respondent can deal with them in order to improve their standing within the community.

Participants saw learning as an on-going and integral part of life; both their social life as well as their serious leisure activity. However, it should be stressed they see that only in terms of their own relationship with learning: *"Learning is something on-going and never ending, it's something I always have for myself"* (Int.3, p.4). As with all elements within this category, attitudes and statements are wholly individual in emphasis and tone. Indeed, it can be suggested that learning, as a dimension of variation within this category, is expressed as a form of self-interest. In acquiring new information, which is the basis for the category and in striving to become the best serious leisure practitioner they can possibly be, the individual is focused squarely on the individual. They are the reason for learning, they are the outcome of learning and they are the means by which learning occurs. Learning is something that is desired, it is something that is needed and it is

something that is acquired: *"I need to know, it's that simple"* (Int.4, p.7). It is also something personal and intimately connected to the individual, either through their connection to a serious leisure activity, their belonging to a specific social 'world' or simply as an act of independence and an expression of egocentricity: *"That's not forgetting that I also love being able to educate ourselves and being selfish I still think that's the absolute experience of using information – to learn for yourself, to educate yourself"* (Int. 19, p.5).

In addition to the general area of self-interest are the more introspective elements of self-worth and self-knowledge. In developing an understanding of what is worthy or unworthy, the individual does not do so as the result of interacting with or reflecting on the actions of another person or persons. Their experience of 'worth' is something self-imposed and directly related to their relationship with their serious leisure activity: *"In knowing more I gain power because I become aware...Aware of the things that would keep me ignorant and powerless"* (Int.6, p.10). There is no suggestion made, by the respondents, that their serious leisure activity imposes any particular moral or ethical code that would impact on their attitude. On the contrary, the respondents express a personal desire to empower themselves as individuals through learning rather than as a result of their relationship to any external body: *"I think there's something empowering about learning – you build yourself up so much and you feel so good about yourself because you are a source of information not just someone who relies on others telling you things"* (Int.17, p.4).

Self-knowledge, in which the person learns about themselves through their experience of

learning, is similarly individualistic. The respondents did not mention learning about or gaining a greater understanding of himself or herself in relation to a topic or a learning community. Rather, the revelatory process occurred in relation to the experience of learning and the relationship the individual develops with information: *"When I learn I don't just learn about the world or the topic I'm interested in I learn about myself too"* (Int.10, p.3). They believed themselves to be better people as a result of their experience with learning but, interestingly, did not appear to connect that personal improvement with an increase in mental facility. Simply, they believed that learning made them better people, not necessarily smarter ones: *"All of this new stuff I've learned, it just makes me a new person and much better than the old one"* (Int.21, p.5). Learning is, therefore, a means by which to educate and elevate the self, which in turn means to elevate the self above others.

It would appear there is little consideration for the future use of information outside of those areas that expressly serve the needs and desires of the individual. That is, the future use of information is to arm the individual with greater stores of knowledge, a more in-depth understanding of their serious leisure topic and an advanced capacity to navigate their social world. However, there is no suggestion that the newfound knowledge and skill-set will be used to advance any cause outside of the individual him or herself. In that regard is it somewhat of an egocentric practice in which learning is a means of development, of the self, and the notion of becoming the best practitioner possible (the focus of the category) is not related to developing the serious leisure community. On the contrary, it is related to developing the individual. That being the case, it can be suggested that within this category learning is a personal, private experience in which

knowledge, knowing and skill development are all for personal gain and self-fulfillment, *"The more I learn and can take in, the more capable I feel as a person and capable of handling other things that get thrown at me. I must be better because I'm better equipped intellectually"* (Int.13, p.5).

4.3.1.4 Category 1 Summary

As a way in which to simplify what has been a lengthy process of explanation and justification a table has been included for each of the four categories of description. The table is not intended to replace the richly detailed description provided within the study. Rather, it provides a visual representation of the complex data that has been presented and is an easy to follow guide as to the critical differences inherent in each category. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the critical dimensions evidenced in Category 1.

Category 1 – Summary

	Category 1: Acquiring new information
Key Quote/s	"Our knowledge isn't inexhaustible so we're always trying to fill in the gaps and build up our supply of new knowledge and information. If our only information is old we'll go stale, new is fresh and it gives us momentum" "There's no doubt that when I use information it's as a way of adapting to changes in attitudes and ways of doing things Information isn't inert, it's living and that makes it the best response to changes in attitudes, behaviours and skills"
Referential Aspect (Meaning of Category)	Information literacy is experienced as acquiring new information.
Structural Aspect (Theme/Focus)	The focus of the category is on the person becoming the best serious leisure practitioner possible and maximizing their potential to function as SL practitioners, within their SL community.
Thematic Field (Background)	• Person's current knowledge base • Learning community • Gathering new information • Acquiring new skills • Filling gaps in knowledge
Margin	None discerned
Dimension of Variation: 1.**EXPERIENCED IDENTITY**	Serious Leisure participant Knowledge Seeker
Dimension of Variation: 2. **LEARNING**	Learning is experienced as: • Performing skill-based tasks • Building personal knowledge • Understanding limitation (of knowledge) • Keeping in touch with new developments • Deepening understanding (of SL pursuit) • Filling gaps in knowledge • Preserving /Protecting area of interest
Dimension of Variation: 3. **INFORMATION**	Information is experienced as: • Skill development • New Information • As a devise (to increase knowledge, learn a skill) • Something new, of value, to be acquired • A personal possession (to be acquired and used)

Table 4.1: Category 1 Summary

4.3.2 Category 2: Helping the learning community

4.3.2.1 Referential aspect (Meaning)

In this category, the information literacy experience is one of knowledge exchange within the context of the serious leisure learning community: *"No doubt a key component is adding to the knowledge mass of people other than yourself. That's key and a huge way we use info – passing it along to make them more informed" (Int.14, p.5).* Unlike categories one, three and four it contains a notable degree of altruism in which the individual directs their energies towards helping other members of their unique learning community acquire and interpret information appropriate to their shared area of interest. In so doing, they not only help fill gaps in their colleagues' knowledge base but they also provide an avenue through which the serious leisure activity itself may be strengthened and, potentially, protected against future neglect. The following quotation illustrates the meaning associated with this experience: *"The more information you build up and pass on to other people to inform them then the more stolid and stable you make the thing you're interested in. If it remains anonymous and information is lacking or missing or not passed on then it's easier for it to be lost and forgotten and misunderstood"* (Int.9, p.4).

That element of protection/preservation comes from increasing the number of informed people engaged with the serious leisure activity (greater knowledge equating to greater understanding and awareness of the activity which, in turn, may lead to committed advocacy and nurturing of the domain). In so doing, the individual, through their actions as disseminator of information, deepens their involvement with the serious leisure

community while also contributing to its well-being and longevity. Subsequently, information literacy, for the individual, is experienced as a multi-faceted means by which education can occur, collaboration can take place, attitudes can be changed and people can connect with one another. That can be seen in the following quote: *"You can't foster awareness without education so that's another important component, a quiet revolution through education. That education isn't just for people who don't know anything about what I'm doing, it's for people who have the same interest but maybe don't know as much or haven't had my experience or are only just getting deeper into things"* (Int.15, p.5).

The individual sees himself or herself as having a significant part to play in the promotion, protection and propagation of the serious leisure topic both as an individual and as part of a learning community. However, that is not to suggest the individual's information literacy experience is devoid of self-interest. On the contrary, in helping others within the learning community they are also helping themselves and furthering their own interests. In so doing, they are able to establish themselves as 'expert' within their field, or more 'expert' in relation to the people they provide with information. That, in turn, increases their status within the learning community. Conversely, it would be incorrect to say that the individuals only see themselves within the role of educator or disseminator of knowledge. Indeed, in acknowledging the essential role that collaboration plays in regard to their information literacy experience they are positioning themselves in a more neutral role. As part of an information collaboration they are neither altruistic or egoistic but operate in harmony with other members of the learning community in order to advance their serious leisure domain.

4.3.2.2 Structural aspect: Focus, background & margin

Focus

The focus within this category is on sharing information with other members of the learning community. Sharing takes place between members of the serious leisure learning community and involves a reciprocal, communal relationship where the individual does not act solely as educator or disseminator of information: *"Information doesn't just free you from ignorance it connects you to other people – some who are interested in the same thing as you, some who aren't but we are still connected by the information itself"* (Int.19, p.12). Education, by way of helping other members of the learning community to increase their store of knowledge, is the central concern of the individual. However, there is a secondary element to the focus wherein the individual becomes engaged in the information sharing relationship as an equal party with other members of the learning community: *"This is a unifying topic but also information and using it is a unifying concept because it connects people who care about similar things"* (Int.18, p.4). That collaboration and mutual exchange of information is neither altruistic nor egoistic in nature and represents a neutral position on the part of the individual wherein they share the same learning status and space as other members of their learning community. Information also allows them to make connections to people who share a similar interest as well as those who don't and the world at large: *"Information connects things and people and lets all of those things understand each other and themselves. Gives you the clarity to see the truth and then how those truths are all connected to themselves and everything else"* (Int.2, p.12). That, in turn, enables the individual to expand their

relationship with information from one confined only to the personal sphere to one in which they are part of an experience which is communal in nature and dynamics.

When the individual does take a more dominant position their stated focus is to fill gaps in knowledge, educate and change the attitudes of fellow members of the learning community: *"People have attitudes. Most of those attitudes are based on misinformation. So a major way we experience using information is as a way to educate people"* (Int.9, p.3). However, it is important to note that experience of information literacy is expressed in two ways. Firstly, there is the experience in which the individual sees him or herself as maven or expert and apart from any communal information relationship, as illustrated by the following quotes, *"Knowledge is never complete, yours, ours or someone else's. So when you use information in a learning capacity you build up someone's knowledge and fill a hole in their understanding and enlighten them"* (Int.13, p.6). In the second instance, where the individual sees sharing of information as taking on a more communal aspect the language changes from 'I' statements to those privileging 'we' and 'us'. That change is illustrated by the following quote: *"So we really use information to educate other people so they can make informed decisions about what we're doing here and so they can address their own attitudes towards it"* (Int. 14, p.6).

The focus also shifts from the individual sharing information with other individuals, or a wider audience, to an experience wherein collaboration is the means by which individuals learn. In that instance, information is shared and no one individual adopts the privileged position of sole information disseminator or educator. Education occurs through involvement in a collaborative experience wherein the development of one individual (in

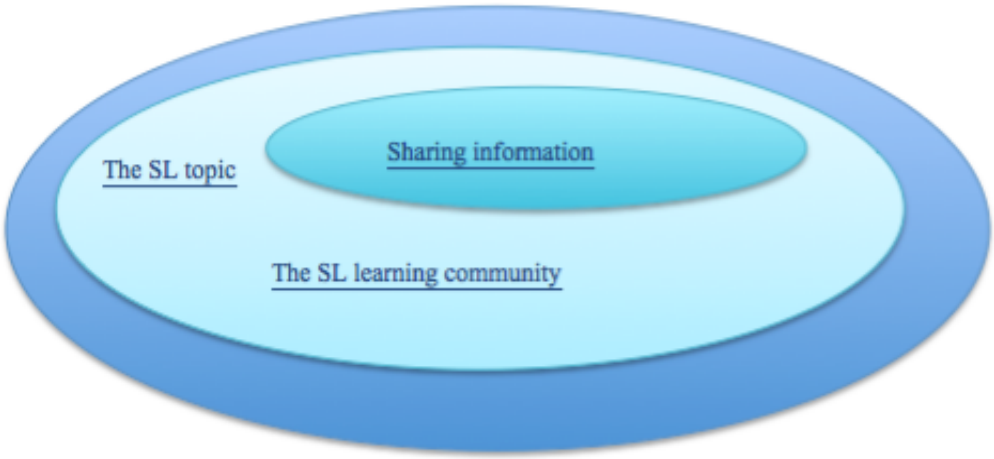
terms of their serious leisure pursuit) is linked to development of another individual or individuals and, ultimately, the serious leisure activity itself. That is illustrated by the following quote: *"We most certainly have a collaborative element because people don't exist in isolation of each other and with families interconnected there's the chance to share information with people from other families who are looking to find out about themselves. We mightn't actually be working together but we are in a way – we share what we can to help each other out"* (Int.13, p.10).

Background

The focus within this category is on sharing information with other members of the learning community. As a result the learning community as a generalised entity and the constituent members of the community are at the fore of the individual's awareness. What sits in the background is the individual themselves and the benefits they derive from helping other members of their learning community. In that regard, the background deals with the egoistic aspect of helping others to learn, sharing information and even being involved in a learning community to begin with, all with the ulterior motive of what can be gained from that involvement. In those instances it would appear as if any focus on developing the serious leisure topic is done with the intention of improving the individual's status or drawing some kind of acclaim to them. The following quote illustrates that point: *"It's important for me to develop credibility among other people who are interested in the same things as me. In developing my reputation I get a greater chance to have a voice in my community. If I have a voice and people take notice because of what I know then I can have a say in the way things are done" (Int. 5, p.6).* Similarly,

"Knowledge isn't just wealth, its power and influence. In my case the more I know the more powerful position I can hold and the more I can direct what we're doing" (Int.19, p.5). There does not appear to be any particular concern for other members of the learning community, and the attitude is that they are a 'necessary evil' useful only so that the individual can attain the goal, station or status they have set for themselves: *"Sometimes people are a necessary evil or at least dealing with them is. It doesn't make me any happier to be involved with a group but sometimes I need what they've got or their resources or something" (Int.2, p.8).*

Figure 4.3 (below) depicts the structure of awareness for this category



4.3.2.3 Dimensions of Variation:

Experienced Identity

Within this category individuals could be seen to display two distinct variations or types of experienced identity. That is, the way they experienced the phenomenon in question was determined by one of two identities which guided their actions, attitudes and the experiential content of their engagement with the phenomenon. The two experienced identities which emerged from analysis of the data were 'Serious Leisure participant' and 'Learning Community member'. In a broader sense they can also be seen to deal with identity experiences that are individualistic (the Serious Leisure participant) and communal (Learning Community member).

In that latter experience, rather than being focused on helping others to learn and grow as practitioners within the serious leisure domain, they are driven by their own motivations: *"Other people are a great vehicle for me to learn more about all this and get ahead. I don't have much interest in the whole community learning thing but I know that sometimes when I need new information tips or tricks I have to look to others" (Int.8, p.4)*. It may be that they envision themselves as an expert and from that perspective their relationship with other members of the learning community is influenced by the notion that they are in possession of information that others want. As they have something that is valued by others they are in a more powerful position and therefore their status, within the learning community, is increased. With an increase in their status they become

positioned almost outside the learning community itself and out of alignment with other members of the learning community. The following quotes illustrate that point: *"I think if you've got any ambition at all about being really expert at what you do, even if it is just in your leisure time, you've got to want to be in charge and take control of the agenda" (Int. 18, p.5).* Similarly, *"I get involved with other people because what's the point of being totally anonymous and having all this information. You use it because you want to be taken notice of, not just because it's fun to have around" (Int.12, p.8).*

That experienced identity (of 'Serious Leisure participant) is typically interested only in the self, in acquiring knowledge and building status to benefit the self. However, outside of those things that directly relate to them as individuals and to their sense of self-fulfillment they appear to have little interest: *"Other people are as much a resource as any book or journal. But they're really not much more than that for me, to be honest. They're a way of getting information but I don't want to be their teacher or get involved with their projects" (Int.21, p.4).*

There is, however, a second experienced identity evident in the category. That identity, rather than revolving around personal interest and self-fulfillment, revolves around helping others within the shared learning community. While it is characterised as 'Learning Community member' it can be seen to manifest itself in three connected but separate ways. They are: gatekeeper (focusing on preservation and protection of the serious leisure activity and, through it, the learning community), educator (in which the individual assists other members of the learning community to acquire knowledge relating to the serious leisure activity) and student (in which the individual learns from

others within the learning community). The roles of educator and student are connected by the collaborative act in which the individual works with other members of the learning community to teach and be taught. The role of gatekeeper combines aspects of both 'educator' and 'student' while focusing primarily on a concern for the well-being and longevity of the serious leisure pursuit.

All three roles are highly social in nature, depending as they do on a cohort greater than just the individual him or herself. That unity can be characterised as 'connecting with other people' and is easily identified in quotes such as the following: *"Information doesn't just free you from ignorance it connects you to other people – some who are interested in the same thing as you, some who aren't but we are still connected by the information itself."* (Int.19, p.12) and *"Information connects things and people and lets all of those things understand each other and themselves. Gives you the clarity to see the truth and then how those truths are all connected to themselves and everything else"* (Int. 19, p.12). Again, all of those elements go towards constructing the experienced identity of 'Learning Community member', however, each has a distinct nuance that is worth recognising in its own right.

The educator identity emerges from the individual assisting other community members by adding to their knowledge base in order to foster awareness and understanding while working to dispel any misconceptions they may hold regarding the serious leisure activity: *"People have attitudes. Most of those attitudes are based on misinformation. So a major way we experience using information is as a way to educate people" (Int. 9, p.3).* It is primarily altruistic in nature and can be seen as an almost involuntary result of being

involved in a learning community: *"I'll admit that my main focus is myself and my own education and building my own knowledge bank but you can't help but to add to other people's knowledge when you do this. The more I learn the more you end up passing along to others and building their data banks"* (Int. 13, p.5).

Education does, however, require more than the display of information, which is where the collaborative element comes into play. Under its auspices the individual works together with other members of the learning community to achieve aims that are beneficial to the group as a whole: *"You could say we swap information with each other and one teaches the other then the roles get reversed. And that's the collaborative element as well where you bounce information off one person and they come back at you with something else"* (Int.4, p.6). Indeed, there appears to be nothing lost (for the individual) by collaborating yet much to be gained both personally and in terms of the serious leisure activity: *"Sharing what we know is a wonderfully enriching experience where we become like a knowledge collective"* (Int. 18, p.6).

There is no suggestion that they feel it necessary to repress any element of themselves in order to take part in the collaborative process. On the contrary, it appears to be viewed as a natural part of belonging to a broader community: *"You can work very closely with other people, sharing information and forming alliances with them based on that sharing of information and building a bigger picture"* (Int.1, p.5). However, it is important to note that collaboration is a process that is entered into willingly, just as engagement with a learning community must be actively pursued. While an individual may form part of a collective audience focused on a particular topic it is not necessary for them to engage

with others who share their interest: *"I see myself as part of something bigger, of a bigger interest base, but I don't get involved with it personally. I know it's there and I belong to it in a way and I'm willing to give to it or add to it, but I'm still outside of it and don't want it any other way"* (Int.2, p.9). An individual may collaborate with a learning community by generating information that can be used for the betterment of the community; however, that does not mean they are required to be active participants. Collaboration, therefore, can be active or passive. In this study it was primarily an active ingredient in the information experience of the participants. However, that did not have to be the case and they could just as easily have been operating in relative isolation from each other.

The final element which goes to making up the experienced identity of 'learning community member' is that of gatekeeper. It is very close in nature to the educational element discussed previously; however, the intent is slightly different and focussed more closely on preservation of the individual's area of interest. Information is the means by which that can occur: *"We most willingly use information to teach people and to show them why we should be preserving our domain. Information is a preserving tool for us most absolutely"* (Int.15, p.3).

While education is necessary for the gatekeeper to achieve their aims they also view information as a tool that will allow them to combat and anticipate potential threats to their serious leisure activity and learning community. That is illustrated by the following quote: *"The more information we uncover the more we can preserve. This information we uncover works as a safeguard against the future. That could be that in the future*

politicians or some other party want to do something, which might damage this slice of our heritage. The information we gather here can help to stop that damage and keep this safe" (Int. 14, p.4). In that regard the gatekeeper is both altruistic and egoistic. They want to preserve the area of interest, which benefits the wider community, but they also want to do it because of their personal connection: *"You want something you love to continue on forever and maybe to grow it and not be forgotten by the people who come in after you"* (Int.20, p.4). The argument could be made that the gatekeeper element is tacitly represented within the elements of educator or collaborator. However, I would argue it is, at the very least, a unique synthesis of the two and there is benefit in viewing it in isolation.

Information

Within this category, information is seen in far more diverse terms than was evident in Category 1. Where, in that instance, it had been envisioned as merely a devise or tool used to increase knowledge and learn a skill or as a thing to be acquired for personal gain and satisfaction, in this category it takes on a far more human aspect. As a result, the individual experiences information as something emerging from and intimately connected to communal interplay in which people learn from and educate one another: *"Being with other people interested in the same thing, whether we're in the same room or not we bring information to the table and we are each other's sources of information. I don't think you can avoid that if you're all concentrating on the same field or topic, someone is going to learn something first and want to share it with everyone else"* (Int.17, p.9).

Information is also experienced as something that connects people through their interest in and response to a shared activity/phenomenon: *"Information connects things and people and lets all of those things understand each other and themselves. Gives you the clarity to see the truth and then how those truths are all connected to themselves and everything else"* (Int.18, p.8). Indeed, information is seen to possess the ability to connect people regardless of whether or not they share similar interests: *"Information doesn't just free you from ignorance it connects you to other people – some who are interested in the same thing as you, some who aren't but we are still connected by the information itself"* (Int.19, p.12). In that regard, information broadens the learning community's scope. While certain parts of it might have a specific interest, such as the serious leisure topic, other parts may have a different concern but be tangentially connected by virtue of the information, which they contextualise in a different fashion.

It can also be said that, within this category, information is experienced as something that is not bound by a specific physical representation. While it may be textual or visual in nature it does not have to be something that can be seen to exist in that way: *"I don't think information comes in one kind of shape only or one place you can find it. There's a whole lot of different types, some you can see, some you can hear and other things you just understand* (Int.16, p.10). Indeed, the learning community itself functions as an information hub, not merely through generating physical data but by bringing together people who share a similar interest, even when those people remain in isolation from one another.

In addition, information is also experienced as the means by which the individual can arm him or her self against future dangers. Those dangers are, in this instance, related to the serious leisure activity: *"If you don't preserve things then what will happen in future generations? And it's not just the average person who benefits, it's– all the people who need to know that we have a cultural history and a rich past that matters. And that's why preserving it is so important – to protect the future"* (Int.18, p.3). In doing so it illustrates that information is not merely seen as the means by which knowledge can be acquired or learning be facilitated. On the contrary, it is also seen as the ingredient necessary for a person to deal with potentially antagonistic elements within their social world, something that foreshadows the following category in which socialisation is of primary concern. The difference being, that within this category, the individual is concerned with the safety of the serious leisure activity, not their own personal safety and well-being. Regardless, the experience of information as a way in which to preserve something of interest to the individual against future neglect is an interesting aspect to note.

Given that it allows people to connect with each other it could be suggested that information operates as a social catalyst: *"This is a unifying topic but also information and using it is a unifying concept because it connects people who care about similar things"* (Int.18. p.4). I would suggest that it is information literacy, not merely information, which has the potential to be socially catalytic. If, as is the case in Category 2, a group of individuals (in this instance it is the serious leisure learning community) are united by their experience of a particular phenomenon (the serious leisure activity) then their response to that phenomenon will be constituted as information literacy. Although

each individual has a unique and personal experience of any and all phenomena, their shared interest in a topic or activity works to form a shared communal experience or understanding. While their initial experience was unique and individual, within the context of the learning community, information literacy becomes the unifying element or 'glue' that makes the disparate (experiences) cohesive and singular.

Learning

Within this category learning has several dimensions. While all of them fall under the umbrella of the 'learning community' and are similar in aspect, each does represent a slightly different aspect of the learning community itself and the type/s of learning operating within it. Firstly there is the social dimension, in which the individual learns about the community in which they operate (in this case that is the serious leisure learning community): *"We most willingly use information to teach people and to show them why we should be preserving our domain. Information is a preserving tool for us most absolutely" (Int.15, p.3).* That refers not to the serious leisure area of interest but, rather, to the people involved with it and who form the learning community. Learning in that dimension represents a form of socialisation in which the individual must navigate a social world full of norms, rules and expectations along with human concerns outside of his or her own: *"There are certain conventions that people have to follow when they're doing this activity with intent. We like to let them know what those things are so they'll be more likely to stick with it and contribute to it going forward " (Int. 15, p.5).* What that illustrates is that there is learning for the individual as an individual, in which they acquire more knowledge about their particular serious leisure activity, but also for them

as a member of the learning community. In that regard they are learning how to be part of the community, what is expected of them (by the community) and how to ensure that the community (which is representative of the serious leisure topic) survives into the future.

Secondly, there is the personal dimension in which the individual learns about him or her self through their engagement with the learning community, *"I'm surprised at what I think it says about me that I can be so willing to share what I know with other people just because we like the same thing"* (Int.6, p.9). Similarly, another quote illustrates that point: *"I'm a different person than I thought I really was or was capable of being and I never would have found that out if I hadn't got involved with people who shared the same passions and me"* (Int.20, p.7).

That self-discovery is made possible due to the individual's engagement, not simply with their serious leisure activity, but with the learning community that emerges from it. In that regard, the learning that goes on within the learning community is holistic in nature. Its *raison d'être* is the serious leisure activity or topic and it does function as a way in which people can learn more about it. However, it also has the potential for the participants to learn more about themselves as people. Therefore, while it can't be said that attaining self-knowledge or self-awareness is strictly a function of or motivation for the learning community it can be said that both constitute potentialities. That applies to even those individuals who operate in complete or almost complete isolation. Indeed, the learning community does not require people to gather together for it to exist. On the contrary, all that is required is that the individual is engaging with the serious leisure

activity, as, through that engagement, they become part of the learning community. Subsequently, what the individual learns about him or herself may come via engagement with other members of the learning community, by way of personal reflective engagement in relation to the activity itself or by a combination of both. In each instance, however, whether it is a learning community of one or one thousand the individual is able to achieve similar states of learning, *"I've never felt limited by not being all bound up with other people just because we share the same interest. I feel freer because I'm by myself and I don't think that anyone learns any more as a group than I can as me"* (Int.3, p.9).

Lastly, there is the serious leisure dimension, in which the person learns more about their area of interest. All of that happens within the context of the learning community whether as part of a wider group or as an individual learning in isolation. The means by which learning occurs is dependent on the individual and their own unique circumstances. However, as leisure is a choice (if it were not undertaken by choice it would not constitute Serious Leisure) so too is the means by which leisure is engaged with. Learning does not require a particular context, only that the individual is engaged and receptive, *"I think I learn as much by myself as I do when I talk about things with other people, they're helpful sometimes but not essential and sometimes they're just distracting"* (Int.7, p.8). Similarly, *"What I get from collaborating with other people is richer than I can get from just going it by myself, plus I get more result quicker"* (Int.22, p.9). Those are two distinct attitudes towards learning, one solitary and the other collaborative, but they serve to illustrate that there is not one format that suits every

individual. On the contrary, there is diversity in learning style just as there is diversity in all forms of life.

4.3.2.4 Category 2 Summary

Table 4.2 provides a summary of the critical dimensions evidenced in Category 2.

Category 2 – Summary

	Category 2: Helping the learning community
Key Quote/s	"It's not only to inform ourselves that we do this but to inform others, to fill gaps in their knowledge base, to enlighten them and make them understand the richness of their and our history" "The more information you build up and pass on to other people to inform them then the more solid and stable you make the thing you're interested in. If it remains anonymous and information is lacking or missing or not passed on then it's easier for it to be lost and forgotten and misunderstood"
Referential Aspect (Meaning of Category)	Information literacy is experienced as helping/aiding/assisting the learning community.
Structural Aspect (Theme/Focus)	The focus of the category is on the person sharing information with their learning community.
Thematic Field (Background)	• Current information levels of the learning community • Protecting the future of the SL topic • The SL topic itself • External bodies affected by or affecting the SL activity and learning community Within this category the focus is on sharing information with other members of the learning community. Therefore, the person sharing information must be aware of the learning community's current level of knowledge. Also, as preservation sits in the background of the person's awareness, they must be cognizant of the potential threats that exist to the integrity and longevity of the serious leisure activity and the learning community.
Margin	None discerned
Dimension of Variation: 1. **EXPERIENCED IDENTITY**	Community member Serious Leisure participant
Dimension of Variation: 2. **LEARNING**	Learning is experienced as: • 'Future-proofing' the SL topic • Helping others • Collaborating with others • Filling gaps in knowledge • Preserving /Protecting area of interest
Dimension of Variation: 3. **INFORMATION**	Information is experienced as: • Self-reflection • Social/Communal in nature • Wisdom/Instruction/Skills to be shared

Table 4.2:Category 2 Summary

4.3.3 Category 3: Self-awareness

4.3.3.1 Referential aspect (Meaning)

In this category, the information literacy experience is one of cultivating social, inter-personal, political and inter-cultural awareness on the part of the individual. Information literacy is experienced as an intrinsic and necessary part of a person's involvement in and with the social world of a community and culture. Therefore, knowing how to effectively navigate those worlds is dependent upon the person's development of information literacy awareness (aptitudes and skills). As with categories one and four, the experience of information literacy is distinctly self-centered: *"This certainly helps to build up my self-esteem and I think the more you know the more confident you feel in yourself and that adds to your notions of self-worth and validity"* (Int.18, p.4). However, unlike category one, it is difficult to call that experience egoistic. On the contrary, it presents as more akin to self-preservation than self- absorption.

What the individual gains from their self-directed experience is the ability to more effectively navigate their social world, understand their place within it and recognise ways in which they can grow as a person within the confines of that domain. Similarly, unlike category four, experience is not necessarily pleasurable and is certainly not engaged with for the purposes of self-gratification. On the contrary, experience is directed by the need for personal development: *"I think that the process of using information, to learn or however you want to say it, helps me to develop as a person*

because it stretches me and forces me to not just become complacent and stop growing as a person" (Int.19, p.2). That development includes elements such as development of individual identity, personal empowerment, development of self-esteem and self-knowledge or self-awareness, understanding of society and the social world as well as personal politicization. Indeed, the experience of information literacy within this category is as a way in which the individual can arm himself or herself against the outside world, *"Learning is also a political act because I elevate myself above ignorance by learning more than some people might want to be known"* (Int.6, p.10).

Information is seen as being necessary for self-preservation as well as success when dealing with the social realm. Therefore, what is being learned is how to survive in the social world while also cultivating and maintaining a presence which is capable, informed and not marginalised by a lack of awareness or personal power (which may include politics as well as self-worth): *"Along with power there's the political edge to knowledge and information. We assuredly use information to learn how to navigate the political waters as well as to swim in them. It's a valuable political tool and ally"* (Int.19, p.5). Information sources range from engagement with the serious leisure topic (a key provider of self-worth), observation and general involvement with the social world and self-reflection in which the individual is able to better understand him or herself, who they are, what they lack what they possess and what they require as members of a social world.

4.3.3.2 Structural aspect: Focus, background & margin

Focus

The focus within this category is on the individual understanding their place within society: In being able to know where they fit within the social world, what society's expectations are of them and what requirements it places upon them as individuals they are better prepared to fashion a response for dealing with it. Illustrating that point is the following quote: *"My identity isn't just built personally, it's also built culturally and socially and you shore yourself up and feel stronger and more capable of dealing with the world the more you know and learn about things and about yourself"* (Int.18, p.4). The individual sees their identity as being an amalgam of their personal, cultural and social influences. Subsequently, seeing themselves in that fashion allows for them to develop a bigger picture of the world and their place in it than one which is only fashioned around their individuality: *"Understanding yourself as part of something bigger than just as an individual person makes you examine yourself and it helps you to learn a lot about yourself as an individual"* (Int.14, p.6). Personal development might be the overarching theme or umbrella heading which best fits this category. However, within that umbrella are several other concerns which, while they do go towards personal development are particularly noteworthy. They include empowerment, self-awareness, self-estimation, societal awareness and personal politicisation. Each is part of the overall focus within the category and they may take primacy or share it depending upon the situation in which the individual finds him or herself.

Information literacy provides a form of stewardship for the individual as they engage with the social world. In being aware of what information is lacking, what information is required and how the information framework of the world in which they are immersed (their society and culture) operates they are able to cultivate a response that protects them (against a lack of information and, therefore, a lack of personal power) and allows them to develop as individuals. The two are not mutually exclusive. The need to develop as an individual is linked to the need to develop awareness of societal power structures: *"Using information to learn is empowering because it connects you to the social world but it also makes you in charge of giving something back to that world as well. I don't just accept what I'm told, I use my brains and my eyes to see the truth or make connections and that makes me more aware of the real world"* (Int.17, p.4). Similarly, the need for awareness in regard to the way society works is intimately connected to the need for personal development.

It should be noted, however, that the focus of the individual is very much on himself or herself. They are not concerned with any learning community associated with their serious leisure activity or any persons apart from themselves. As a result, when they speak of cultivating self-awareness, self-esteem or political acumen it is only from and for a personal perspective: *"Learning is also a political act because I elevate myself above ignorance by learning more than some people might want to be known"* (Int.6, p.10). Subsequently, the experience of using information to learn, within this category and any context/s that might fit within it, is an individualistic experience. That they are dealing with the social world does not broaden their focus to take in the concerns of the broader population. They remain fixed on themselves and their experience/s.

Background

The focus within this category is on the individual understanding their place in society. The person's focus is on their present situation in which they see themselves to be lacking some degree or form of social awareness, which they, in turn, see as diminishing their ability to successfully navigate their social world: *"On the surface what you do in your leisure time is about you as a person and about whatever your hobby is. But there's more to it than that. At the deep end is you learning survival skills for just being out there in the world"* (Int.10, p.8). In short, they wish to empower themselves by overcoming what they see to be a lack in their current levels of social and personal awareness. The focus is on what they lack. However, in order to identify what they lack they must also be aware of what they possess. That understanding, of their current state of being, constitutes part of the background to this category.

Similarly, another element within that background consists of the people who make up the social world in which the individual exists. When the individual talks about cultivating political awareness and power or self-awareness they do not do so within a vacuum. Rather, they are judging themselves and the presence or absence of idealized traits, against other members of their society (as it exists outside of the more narrow focus of the serious leisure social world). Therefore, to be empowered requires the individual to not only evaluate their current level of personal authority but also to compare it to others operating within the same society. That experience is summed up by the following quote, *"Without information I'd be left with my responses and reactions*

that would be wonderful but that I wouldn't be able to understand or really put into context and then I wouldn't understand myself because I had no idea why I was having the experience I was having, what it meant and what it was supposed to be used for (Int.5, p.5).

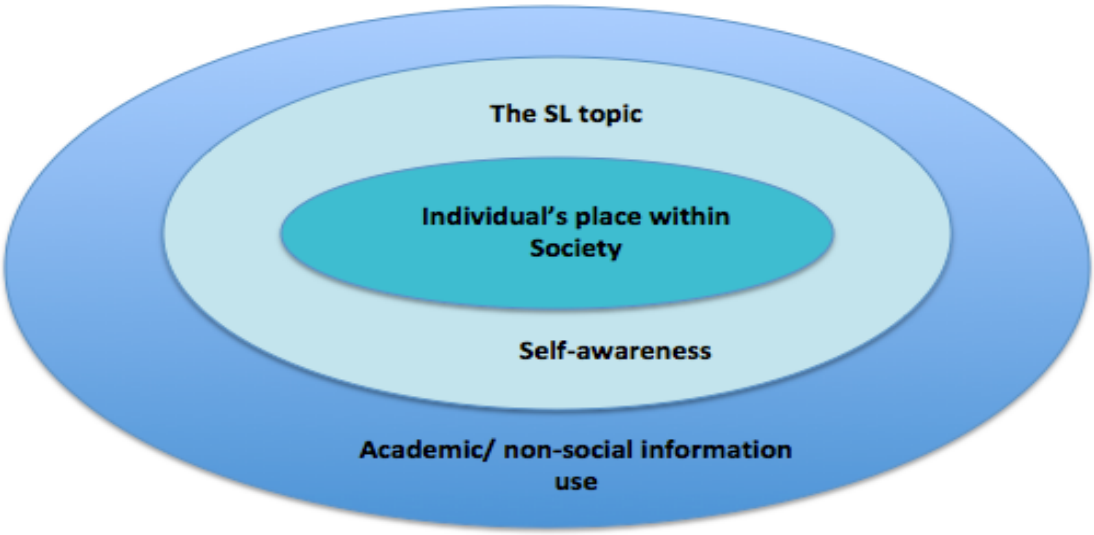
It could also be argued that, within this category, the person's Serious Leisure activity moves into the background. They are still very much aware of it, which is evident in comments made during interviews. Participants stated their belief that pursuing their serious leisure activity allowed them to develop personally and socially. Subsequently, their serious leisure activity is still perceivable within their structure of awareness. However, it does not command their focus as it does in the other categories.

Margin

The focus within this category is on understanding the individual's place within society. Subsequently, the person is aware of a need to develop as a social entity. They are aware of an imminent or future purpose to which that development will be put. They are aware of their own personal desires – for awareness, for power (over themselves and/or others). However, as can be seen in Figure 4.4, what sits in the margins of their awareness is information's academic dimension/application. What muddies this category somewhat is the distinction between what an individual sees as important in developing personal awareness and what a society or culture deems as important. It cannot be assumed that the person and their society/culture share the same norms, values and attitudes. If the person belongs to a particular social sector or sub-group or demographic their attitudes

and opinions can be coloured by their sense of belonging to that group while exhibiting a degree of apartness from the social mainstream.

Figure 4.4 (below) depicts the structure of awareness for this category



4.3.3.3 Dimensions of Variation

Experienced Identity

Within this category the question of *experienced identity* is far clearer than it was in categories one or two. Unlike them, there is really only one clear *experienced identity* at play and it can be categorised as 'member of the/a social world'. While there are nuances to the individual's *experienced identity,* such as their relationship to themselves, their relationship to the world at large, to their serious leisure topic (although it is not a primary concern), their relationship to other members of the community and their relationship to societal constructs, situations and figures of power and control, they are

only subtle manifestations of the 'social identity' which dominates this category.

The individual speaks of him or her self as being part of a society but not in any position of authority: *"No-one gives you the information you need or tells you how to get ahead or to be in charge of your life. I have to fight for it and find that out for myself"* (Int.16, p.6). The impression given is that they consider themselves to be somewhat marginalised if only in regard to a perceived lack of personal power and control over whatever orthodoxy drives their social world. Subsequently, they discuss their experience of information, as providing them with something they don't have but believe they require, *"On the surface what you do in your leisure time is about you as a person and about whatever your hobby is. But there's more to it than that. At the deep end is you learning survival skills for just being out there in the world" (Int.10, p.8).*

That being the case, it can be suggested that the individual's experienced identity does not simply emerge through their membership within a society, culture or community but is, rather, formed by their conception of themselves as possessing an almost 'fringe' status within the social world: *"The more you learn I think the more you see that being informed and intelligent means you're not one of the mainstream. If you were part of that then you wouldn't have any questions would you, you'd already be thinking the same way as everyone else. An open mind and an enquiring mind means you're always alone in a way"* (Int.18, p.8). Situating them on that fringe is their solitary status (they speak of themselves as individuals, not as part of any collective) and a perceived lack of power – political, social and personal. In being marginalised, if only by perception, they see their information literacy experience as being the means by which they can challenge their

lack of power, influence and control while potentially affecting a change in their circumstances *vis a vis* their relationship to society: *"Using information to learn is empowering because it connects you to the social world but it also makes you in charge of giving something back to that world as well. I don't just accept what I'm told, I use my brains and my eyes to see the truth or make connections and that makes me more aware of the real world"* (Int.18, p.4).

Interestingly, the individual's *experienced identity* did not appear to include any mention of their gender or age. Given that 65% of the respondents in this study were female and 50% of all respondents were over the age of 50, it is somewhat surprising that the identity they experience when dealing with this particular phenomenon (being a member of a society) is not significantly influenced by either of those two factors. At least, if it is significantly influenced by either of those factors it did not emerge during the interview phase or data analysis. While an examination of the reasons for that omission falls outside the bounds of this study it is nonetheless interesting to note. Perhaps, the individual's connection to a serious leisure activity overrides (in some way) those influences and rather than experiencing an identity shaped by either of those factors (in relation to their social world), they experience one which is shaped by either their serious leisure activity or their individuality.

In this particular instance, in relation to Category 3, where people have not articulated an *experienced identity* which is influenced by age, gender or sexuality, it provides a prime example of why 'Experienced *Identity'* is much more valuable as a research or investigatory lens (and provides greater depth and insight) than 'Role'. 'Role' only

accounts for the way/s in which the individual acts in relation to a particular phenomenon. It can tell us about behaviour but not experience and, even when it is informing us about behaviour it fails to do so with any depth. It can provide us with a surface reading of a person's actions or behaviours but not their thinking or their metaphysical relationship to a particular phenomenon. *Experienced Identity,* on the other hand, opens a dialogue in regard to the way in which the individual (or individuals) sees him or her self in relationship to a phenomenon.

Information

In this category, information is seen as the ingredient necessary for a person to achieve social growth and personal development. However, it (information) is not confined to tangible, visible data alone. On the contrary, it also includes things such as information gleaned through social interaction, through observation of other individuals and/or groups, through practical/physical engagement with and in an activity or simply through the individual being part of their social world: *"A lot of times I just sit back and look at what's happening around me and use that as the basis for how I should proceed and act or do things"* (Int.17, p.4). That gives an indication of the 'apartness' the individual can feel within their social world. While they understand that they need to be able to operate within it they do not necessarily feel that they are intimately connected to it. Instead, the various elements that constitute information provide the individual with a blueprint of how best to function within a community, culture and society, while also providing them with some insight into their place in each of those contexts: *"On the surface what you do in your leisure time is about you as a person and about whatever your hobby is. But*

there's more to it than that. At the deep end is you learning survival skills for just being out there in the world" (Int.10, p.8).

That being the case, the types of information the individual engages with are, by necessity, supportive of their own self-interest. However, that does not mean their experience is egoistic in a negative sense. Rather, their aim is to find a way in which to navigate within a complex social world and protect themselves from the threats it might confront them with. Therefore, their experience of information is egoistic by necessity and, in truth, operates as a safeguard as well as a natural part of societal development: *"No-one gives you the information you need or tells you how to get ahead or to be in charge of your life. I have to fight for it and find that out for myself"* (Int.16, p.6). Information is not, as in category four, a means of entertainment or, as in category two, a collaborative, communal ingredient. Instead it is personal, necessary and integral to the individual's continued existence within the world/s they inhabit. That said, information is experienced within the context of the individual's serious leisure activity, as well as their social interactions. However, within this category it is the societal aspect that appears to be more significant.

Learning

Within this category, learning is experienced as a way in which to protect the individual against elements within society (as opposed to the social world of the serious leisure activity) which may not have their best interests at heart, a way of understanding how to act and behave within a social world the individual feels somewhat marginalised by, a

means by which to understand the self in relation to society (as an individual in relation to the group) and a tool for navigating within a complex social world.

Learning, as has already been suggested, is a form of self-interest and that becomes clearer in this category. However, that self-interest isn't purely egoistic or lacking in purpose. On the contrary, the individuals see learning, within this category, as an integral part of self- preservation in their relation to and dealings with the social world: *"Being able to feel not that I'm part of society but that I can understand what the world wants from me and needs me to do or be or whatever are things I learn when I'm involved with information"* (Int.22, p.7).

The focus of the individual, as it was in the first category, is firmly on himself or herself and their concern is to find a way in which they might understand the social world in which they live while uncovering ways in which to successfully navigate within it. That is considered to be an on-going experience that people must engage with by virtue of their presence within the social world: *"On the surface what you do in your leisure time is about you as a person and about whatever your hobby is. But there's more to it than that. At the deep end is you learning survival skills for just being out there in the world"* (Int.10, p.8). Similarly, *"We don't learn in isolation from the real world, that's not true at all. Even when we're engaged with our hobbies and our, whatever-occupies-our-time, we're learning how the world works and how to make sure we don't get tripped up by one of its big pot holes"* (Int.20, p.5). While there may be no attempt made to critically engage with the information present and experienced during their dealings with the social world, there is no way in which to escape from a relationship with learning. A person

may choose to accept what is presented to them as fact or they may elect to examine it with some caution. Regardless of the path they elect to take – the critical or the acquiescent- they both represent modes of learning.

Learning is behavioural, it is observational and it is relational. Indeed, there is no one way in which learning occurs or any 'best' method. Each person selects the mode best suited to them and is most appropriate for their task in hand: *"When you do learning it's a whole lot more than books and the Internet. Sometimes you just learn by watching people do things, or see how things work with each other or you take a leap and try something to see what works. You learn every way and the best one just depends on you and the situation"* (Int.16, p.9). At times they will learn by 'doing', via some practical and active participation in the learning process that sees them gain understanding by way of physical interaction with a task or activity: *"Nothing beats doing a task for learning a skill or working something out in your head. Some people are visual and some are physical and I'm one of those ones who learns by doing"* (Int.4, p.5).

The learning that occurs in that regard may come from undertaking the activity itself or it may occur upon later reflection. When learning is observational the individual will gain understanding via observing the actions of others within their social world and learn how to act when confronted with similar situations. They might also gain an understanding of some function within society (gender/personal/political relationships, for example) by observing how it occurs within their social world. Similarly, relational learning can occur when the individual experiences the interplay between two elements within the social world (such as individuals, groups, beliefs, politics, religion, ethics and morality) and will

learn how those elements operate, individually and in relation to one another, as well as learning how to respond when confronted by those elements in the future: *"Some things are combustible in opposition to each other, like freedom of speech and politics or religion. You learn a lot just by watching what happens when they go head-to-head"* (Int.18, p.8).

Unlike category one, learning is not simply related to filling gaps in knowledge. Unlike category two, there is no mention of sharing what comes from learning (knowledge) with any other parties. On the contrary, learning appears to be wholly individualistic in nature. Unlike category four, learning is not constituted as entertainment. Rather, within this category, it is constituted as something that occurs within the social world as part of the individual's existence as a member of a society or culture. It is an on-going activity that is not confined merely to a behavioural accumulation of data and has as its principal aim protection of the individual against those elements within the social world that would limit their ability to genuinely act as individuals: *"Learning is something on-going and never ending. It's something I always have for myself to protect myself and make sure I don't get into trouble because I didn't know what was right or wrong"(Int.20, p.9).* That is not to suggest, however, that learning only occurs in relation to things that are located within the social world. On the contrary, the individual's involvement with their serious leisure topic also facilitates learning. Given the nature of this study and the deep involvement the participants have with their serious leisure interests, it is hardly surprising they are able to find within it the means by which to examine a world beyond the one that encompasses their leisure activity.

It could also be argued that self-knowledge is somewhat in the social sphere as the individual's growth as a person does impact upon their ability to operate within the social world and vice versa. In learning about their place within the social world they learn about themselves. Subsequently, their development as an individual can be seen as connected to that societal learning and in many ways quite dependent upon it: *"The more I learn and can take in, the more capable I feel as a person and capable of handling other things that the world throws at me. I must be better because I'm better equipped intellectually so how can the things that used to phase me be a problem any longer"* (Int.15, p.8).

4.3.3.4 Category 3 Summary

Table 4.3 provides a summary of the critical dimensions evidenced in Category 3.

Category 3 – Summary

	Category 3: Self-awareness
Key Quote/s	"With an examination of the self and an understanding of your place within society and the importance of heritage and cultural history you also hit on developing your identity as an individual, as a person but also as a member of a community, a society, a culture, a nation" "My identity isn't just built personally but it's also built culturally and you shore yourself up and feel stronger as a part of society when you use information"
Referential Aspect (Meaning of Category)	Information literacy is experienced as developing personal and social awareness / developing awareness of the self and society
Structural Aspect (Theme/Focus)	The focus of the category is on the person understanding his or her place within their social world.
Thematic Field (Background)	• Existing levels of awareness • The SL topic • The Learning Community • Developing self-awareness Within this category the focus is on what the person lacks regarding their understanding of society and their role within it. However, in order to identify what they lack they must also be aware of what they possess. Subsequently, their understanding of their current state of being constitutes the background to this category.
Margin	• Other social worlds outside that of the SL participant's • Other societal norms
Dimension of Variation: 1. **EXPERIENCED IDENTITY**	Member of Society / Social Being / Socially Aware Being
Dimension of Variation: 2. **LEARNING**	Learning is experienced as: • Developing social awareness / Learning role within society / Understanding society • Developing self-awareness / understanding self as part of a culture and community • Developing Identity
Dimension of Variation: 3. **INFORMATION**	Information is experienced as: • Tacit information • Self-reflection • Observation (Social) • Collaboration (Social)

Table 4.3: Category 3 Summary

4.3.4 Category 4: Entertainment

4.3.4.1 Referential aspect (Meaning)

In this category, the information literacy experience is one of personal enjoyment and self-fulfillment achieved through engagement with the person's serious leisure activity. Information exists as the means by which that enjoyment can be had. There is no concentration on disseminating information, although that may play some part in the person's activities. Rather, information is of interest, for the person, only in the way interacting with and utilising it provides a measure of enjoyment for them. Indeed, what is entertaining for the individual is also what attracted them to the activity in the first place (the feeling that it may prove enjoyable to engage with) and keeps them involved with it: *"If it wasn't fun, I wouldn't still be doing it and I probably would never have done it in the first place. But it is a lot of fun, all of the things that go to making it are things that still make me happy today"* (Int.20, p.7).

Given that the component of longevity is seen to be integral to a serious leisure activity it is not surprising that the respondents found amusement and pleasure in their area of interest. The information elements in which they find that pleasure can range from acquiring technical know-how, building or creating something, learning new information, dealing with other people who share a similar interest to them and, simply, being part of the domain in which the activity exists. In that regard, entertainment can be physical and active but it may also be visceral, cerebral and passive. However, unlike categories one and two, there is no suggestion the individuals see information literacy as contributing to

their betterment as people or as serious leisure participants. Its value and their reason for engaging with it is purely pleasurable in nature, *"Don't forget though, this is also a lot of fun for me and I do consider it to be my chosen form of recreation and rest"* (Int.18, p.2). Any added benefits, to them as members of the serious leisure social world and society in general (the social world outside of the serious leisure social world) are very much secondary to the way it entertains and amuses.

4.3.4.2 Structural aspect: Focus, background & margin

Focus

The focus within this category is on the individual being entertained through engaging with a serious leisure activity. Unlike in the other categories, the focus is not on bettering either the self or the learning community. There is no desire to help others, fill gaps in knowledge (technical or social) or provide stewardship for the serious leisure activity. Rather, the focus is squarely on the serious leisure activity and all it entails providing the participant with entertainment and a level of pleasure from engaging with an activity or an area of interest of their choosing, *"All that really matters is that I'm enjoying what I do and so long as I continue to enjoy it I'll continue to do it. No point carrying on if it's not fun any longer"* (Int.20, p.5). How they achieve that pleasurable state is not their concern, only that they manage to do so. As a result, the experience of using information to learn is highly individualistic, self-centered and self-regulated. It does not matter whether any other person derives or can derive enjoyment and entertainment from a similar experience of information literacy. All that matters is that the individual

constitutes that experience as something entertaining and gratifying: *"There's no real deep meaning or anything significant like that. I just have fun and that's why I got into it in the first place and why I stay with it"* (Int.17, p.7).

It is possible that the only statement that can be made about the 'pleasurable state' is that it includes elements such as relaxation and stress relief as well as engaging with other aspects that might give a person pleasure, such as thirst for knowledge, desire to relive some part of their childhood, general curiosity and as a means by which to stay active at a later stage in life. That is illustrated by the following quotes: *"You've got to keep going when you get older. Just because you retire doesn't mean you stop being alive and my scrapbooking and being with other people who are interested in it and want to talk about it that helps to keep me young and alive. I need that energy I get from them and having a passion that belongs to me"* (Int.10, p.8) and, *"It really takes me back to another time in my life when things were a lot simpler and we hadn't been overwhelmed by technology"* (Int.16, p.5). In that regard, entertainment becomes not only a form of therapy but also a link to other stages within the individual's life course. As a result, by virtue of its possessing such highly personal and beneficial properties, entertainment as a category (within this study) becomes more significant and potentially complex than might first be imagined.

Background

The focus within this category, as is shown in Figure 4.5, is on the individual being entertained by and gaining enjoyment (by way of that entertainment) through engaging

with their serious leisure area of interest: *"This is how I wind down and relax. It's just as much about relaxation and recreation as it is learning and doing something"* (Int.11, p.2). Subsequently the individual constitutes their information experience as being both pleasurable and satisfying (satisfaction being derived from pleasure). That pleasure, which takes precedence over other information related concerns, is directly connected to their serious leisure activity. As a result, the entertainment they derive from the information experience is twofold. On one hand there is pleasure gained from acquiring, analysing, absorbing and understanding information: *"This is never a chore for me, it's always fun, no-matter what I'm doing or how long it takes to do"* (Int.15, p.6). On the other hand there is the pleasure gained from using that information for a particular purpose. The pleasure is not derived from achieving any specific aim but, rather, from the entire experience leading up to the end result. Their focus is only on the information experience as a pleasurable, satisfying and engaging source of entertainment.

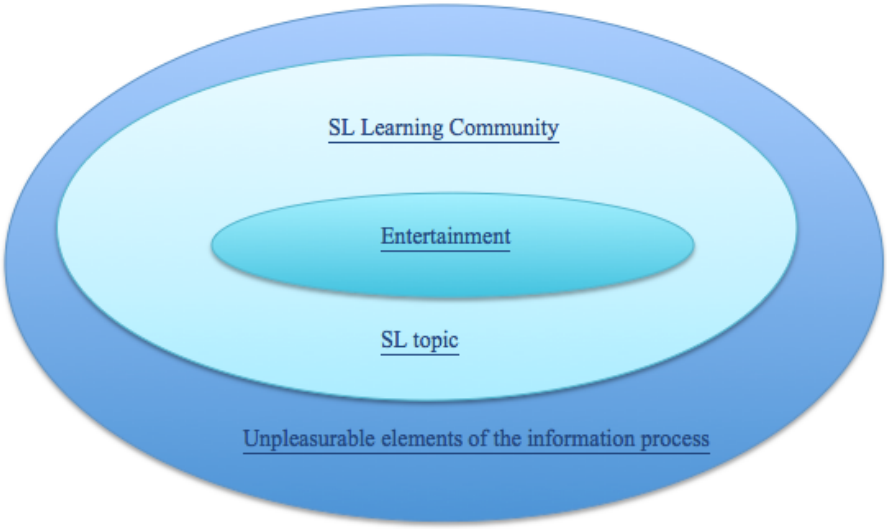
The entertainment experienced during that information engagement might include learning new things about their serious leisure topic. If it does (and the data suggests that is likely to be the case) then the serious leisure topic will occupy a position in the background of their awareness. However, while they may be aware of it as a possible beneficiary of their entertainment it is not their primary concern and, as such, sits just outside of their focus (within the background): *"All that I care about is that I'm having fun, anything outside of that is just fluff and I wouldn't worry about it so it doesn't spoil the fun I'm having"* (Int. 14, p.8). Subsequently, as part of that pleasurable experience the person has an awareness of the purpose for which they will be using the information they

acquire and, potentially, the domain or area of interest that spawned the information. That awareness does not mean either of those two entities will drive the individual's information experience within this category. Rather, they will be aware of but not necessarily moved by their presence. Entertainment, enjoyment and pleasure are their focus while the serious leisure activity itself merely sits in the background as a non-competing and non-intrusive presence.

Margin

The focus within this category is solely personal – dealing with personal entertainment and the enjoyment gained from being entertained. Subsequently, information engagement (information literacy) is only constituted as a pleasurable act. Any information experiences that the person may constitute as not being pleasurable are pushed to the margins of awareness.

Figure 4.5 (below) depicts the structure of awareness for this category



4.3.4.3: Dimensions of Variation

Experienced Identity

Within this category the question of *experienced identity* is unclear. When dealing with something that is both sensory and emotional, such as 'pleasure', it is difficult to say that the individual experiences either of those things by way of a particular identity. It could be that those elements are experienced by way of engagement with the serious leisure topic, in which case the dominant identity (the *experienced identity)* would be that of 'serious leisure participant'. On the other hand, it could be that pleasure is achieved through engaging with information in a social setting or through connection with others who share a similar interest. In that case *pleasure seeker* would shape as the more likely classification.

What gives pleasure is not in question. It is, for the participants in this study, their engagement with information in all its forms and functions, which provides them with gratification: *"This is how I wind down and relax. It's just as much about relaxation and recreation as it is learning and doing something"* (Int.11, p.2) and *"This is a voluntary undertaking for all for all of us involved it serves as a form of recreation and enjoyable pastime"* (Int.19, p.2). However, while they might be categorised as 'pleasure *seekers',* that does not satisfy as an identity. They gain pleasure from engaging with information but not from seeking pleasure. On the contrary, pleasure is the direct result of their engaging with information and it is the reason why they continue their involvement with the Serious Leisure activity: *"If it wasn't fun, I wouldn't still be doing it and I probably would never have done it in the first place. But it is a lot of fun, all of the things that go to*

making it are things that still make me happy today" (Int.20, p.7). Subsequently, classing them as merely *information seekers* ignores the pleasurable aspect to their information experience, while categorising them as *pleasure seekers* ignores the primacy of information to their pleasure. In that regard it could be that this category is more than closely aligned with category one (acquiring new information) and is actually a sub-category of it. Or, it could be that in dealing with an intangible such as 'pleasure' we are presented with a causality dilemma in which it is not possible to say which comes first, seeking pleasure or seeking information. That said, there does appear to be enough distinctness in this experience of information to recommend it as a unique and separate category in its own right.

Information

As with learning, information is an ingredient in the entertainment or pleasure seeking process that keeps the individual actively interested in their serious leisure topic. However, respondents did not elaborate on what part of the information experience they found pleasurable. In their discussions they spoke of all information as being entertaining and no attention was paid to those elements of the information experience that they might have considered to be less than enjoyable. As the respondents explain it and as they constituted their response to the questions posed, all information (not just the serious leisure activity itself) is pleasurable and entertaining. Similarly, there is no attempt made to categorise which elements are more or less enjoyable than others: *"All of this is just fun and you really can't make a distinction between any one part being more fun than the other parts, it just is all the same"* (Int.20, p.7). That is not to suggest they aren't aware

of any aspects that are mundane, simply that it does not form any part of their dialogue and is, therefore, outside the scope of this study. Information is, simply, part of the entertainment experience that emerges from their engagement with their Serious Leisure topic. That is not to suggest information is looked upon as a tool or devise that can be used to entertain. Rather, it is spoken of as being entertainment. No attempt is made to elevate any one aspect – entertainment, information or learning - above the other, *"I don't look at any of it as being less fun or not fun, I think it's all so enjoyable I couldn't think about any of it not being as good to do as the other parts"* (Int.22, p.4). To the respondents they are all equal because they are all the same thing. Information is entertainment, learning is entertainment and entertainment consists of learning and information: *"every way you turn you're having a good time, if you're looking for information or teaching yourself something it's all a lot of fun to be doing"* (Int.7, p.6).

Learning

The second dimension of variation in the fourth category ('Pleasure Seeker') is 'Learning'. Within this category learning is experienced as a component of entertainment but not as the motivating force behind engagement with information. As with experienced identity, it is difficult to categorise the way in which learning operates within a category where the individual's focus is on entertaining themselves. While learning may occur it will manifest itself in a different fashion to the other categories. In those instances learning was a dimension in which the individual made himself or herself a better serious leisure practitioner, a more valuable member of a learning community or a more capable and informed member of society. In this category, however, the individual

learns what they find entertaining or what gives them the greatest pleasure in relation to their serious leisure activity or the information experience as a whole: *"I think over time you work out what gives you the most enjoyment and pleasure and that's what you concentrate on and leave the other stuff alone"* (Int.22, p.4). It is a very personal response and doesn't take into account any notions of pleasure other than those of the individual: *"Should it matter to anyone else what I find entertaining or not? I don't think so and I don't really care about anyone else, this is my way of having fun and letting off steam"* (Int.22, p.9). That being the case, the individual may, in learning what they find entertaining, learn something about himself or herself. However, that reflective 'outcome', is not in any way necessary for the individual to be entertained or attain the pleasure they were seeking. Indeed, what they are striving for is a sensory reaction (pleasure) rather than simply an intellectual engagement. Similarly, they are not requiring any concrete, physical evidence that they have learned something (such as a document they have written or a model they have built). All that matters is that they have found pleasure in being engaged with their serious leisure topic.

4.3.4.4 Category 4 Summary

Table 4.4 provides a summary of the critical dimensions evidenced in Category 4.

Category 4 – Summary

	Category 4: Entertainment
Key Quote/s	"This really is an entertainment activity for me and I use information to learn about this I'm entertaining myself" "This is totally how I entertain myself…information helps me to entertain myself" "This is so how I wind down and relax. It's just as much about relaxation and recreation as it is learning and doing something"
Referential Aspect (Meaning of Category)	Information literacy is experienced as entertainment
Structural Aspect (Theme/Focus)	The focus of the category is on the person enjoying him or herself through engaging with information as part of their serious leisure activity
Thematic Field (Background)	• Serious leisure topic • Learning community • Gathering new information • Acquiring new skills • Filling gaps in knowledge The experience of information engagement as a means by which pleasure can be derived is to the fore. However, in the background sit the ways and means through which that pleasurable state may be obtained.
Margin	The information process – they are only focussed on the outcome which is, in this category, entertainment
Dimension of Variation: 1. **EXPERIENCED IDENTITY**	Pleasure Seeker
Dimension of Variation: 2. **LEARNING**	Information use is experienced as: • Entertainment
Dimension of Variation: 3. **INFORMATION**	Information is experienced as: • Entertainment • Recreation • A voluntary undertaking • Self-gratification • A relaxation device/tool

Table 4.4: Category 4 Summary

4.4 Outcome Space: An Overview

The 'outcome space' is the final result or outcome of the phenomenographic study. It consists of the categories of description, each showing a distinctive aspect of the phenomenon in question (how it is experienced by the interview cohort), while also revealing a logical and ordered representation of the relationships that exist between the categories themselves. While the outcome space is an interpretation by the researcher or research team it is also firmly grounded in the data gathered during the interview stage (Bruce, Buckingham, Hynd, McMahon, Roggenkamp & Stoodley, 2004). According to Marton, "each category is a potential part of a larger structure in which the category is related to other categories of description. It is a goal of phenomenography to discover the structural framework within which various categories of understanding exist" (Marton 1986, p.34).

Several notable phenomenographers (e.g., Marton, 1994; Svensson, 1995; Edwards, 2007) have suggested that, within the outcome space, the categories form a hierarchical or nested picture of the phenomenon in question. However, that is not a view shared by all researchers (Pramling, 1995; Sjostrom & Dahlgren, 2002). Indeed, Akerlind (2002b) contends that, due to the involvement of the researcher, every phenomenographic study will contain a necessarily interpretivist element that comes to the fore in the outcome space. To that end, the categories may display no clear hierarchy but, rather, align with one another through a series of logical relationships (Akerlind, Bowden & Green, 2005).

In this study, the outcome space consists of four categories of description and three

dimensions of variation. Those dimensions of variation connect each category while also providing a point of distinction between each of them. As can be seen in Table 4.5, the categories of description are presented with particular reference to Meaning, Focus, Background, Margin and Dimensions of Variation. The Meaning is also referred to as the referential aspect while Focus, Background and Margin comprise the structural aspect of the categories.

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
Referential Aspect (Meaning of Category)	Information Literacy is experienced as acquiring new information	Information literacy is experienced as helping the learning community	Information literacy is experienced as developing personal awareness	Information literacy is experienced as entertainment
Structural Aspect (Theme) (Focus)	Becoming best SL practitioner possible	Sharing information with learning community	Understanding person's place in society Navigating social world	Personal enjoyment/ Entertainment / Self-fulfillment
Thematic Field (Background)	SL Topic Person's current knowledge base Learning community Gathering new information Acquiring new skills Filling gaps in knowledge	Current information levels of the learning community Protecting the future of SL topic The SL topic itself External bodies affected by or affecting the SL learning community	Existing levels of awareness The SL topic Learning Community Developing self-awareness	The SL topic itself The SL learning community Leisure
Margin	None discerned	None discerned	Other social worlds outside that of the SL participant's Other societal norms	The information process (they are only focussed on the information outcome which is, in this category, entertainment)
Dimension of Variation: **Experienced Identify**	Serious Leisure participant Knowledge Seeker	Active member of a learning community	Member of society Socially Aware Person	Pleasure Seeker
Dimension of Variation: **Learning**	Learning about SL activity	Community activity, Shared experience	Learning of social role	Learning as entertainment
Dimension of Variation: **Information**	Information as a source of education	Information as 'Future Proofing' of SL topic	Information as personal growth (personal development)	Information experience as entertainment (self-gratification)

Table 4.5- Summary of the Categories of Description

The four categories of description can now be mapped into an outcome space. The outcome space represents the phenomenon in question. It consists of the categories of description and presents, in a systematic fashion (Svensson, 1995) the logical relationship/s that exist between them. It has been suggested that in the outcome space each of the categories of description will reveal something unique about the phenomenon under study as well as about the categories themselves (Marton & Booth, 1997). In looking at structuring or ordering of the relationships that exist between the categories there is no clear-cut hierarchy. Indeed, it would appear that what is in evidence is a situation in which the categories of description align with one another through a series of logical relationships (Akerlind, Bowden & Green, 2005). The following diagram, Figure 15, represents the relationship which exists between the categories and that form the outcome space.

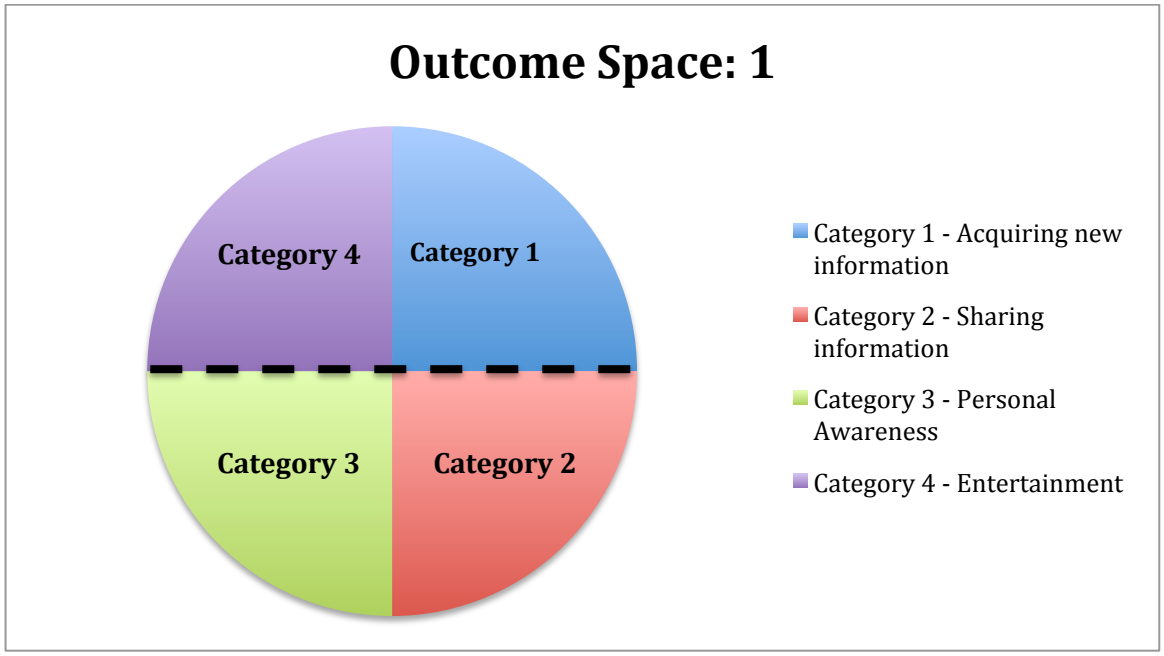


Figure 4.6: The Outcome Space: 1

As can be seen there is no hierarchical element to the diagram. A circle has been chosen deliberately because there is no top or bottom. Rather, what is first, last and in the middle is merely a matter of personal choice or context. Indeed, given the nature of a circle, what can be seen at the top in this instance could easily be rotated to appear at the bottom. That would cause no impact upon the nature and significance of the categories or their relationship to each other. Similarly, the numbering system that exists is functional only. The first numbered category is no more dominant or significant than the fourth, second or third numbered. However, that is not to suggest there is uniformity between the categories. On the contrary, there is a distinction in perspective (internal versus external) that exists between categories one and four and categories three and two. That distinction and its implications are discussed as follows.

4.4.1 Relationships between the categories

According to researchers such as Akerlind, Bowden and Green (2005), while the categories themselves may differ and their emphasis may be somewhat divergent it is still essential that they display structural relationships of some description. Given that the outcome space, while not resulting in an actual outcome or final statement, does still provide an orderly presentation and linkage of the categories of description some structural relationship will be evident. To that end, close analysis of the categories indicated the presence of certain trends and patterns. They, in turn, provided the lines of association that phenomenographic researchers claim to be a critical and integral part of phenomenography (Bowden, 2000; Akerlind, 2002; Akerlind, Bowden and Green, 2005). Chief among those trends are patterns referred to within this study as the internal and

external ‘perspective’. That ‘perspective’ deals with the primary relationship that exists between the categories and refers to the way in which the individuals’ experience of the phenomenon in question is directed towards something internal or external to themselves.

In categories one and four the individual’s experience of the phenomenon in question is focussed internally on their ‘skill and knowledge’ or ‘entertainment’ respectively. In categories two and three, on the other hand, the focus shifts external to the individual onto the ‘serious leisure community’ and the ‘social world’. In both of those latter instances the individual’s experience is constructed in relation to an external agent that requires them to respond to it. Entertainment and acquiring information, categories four and one respectively are generated by and in relation to the individual. While they may be entertained or provided with knowledge by external agents their level of entertainment and acquisition of knowledge is generated by and in relation to themselves (to their preferences in regard to entertainment and to their current level of knowledge). However, their ability to share information with a learning community and to gain personal awareness by learning how to navigate society is driven by an agent external to themselves.

Those relationships, which exist between the categories, can best be thought of as ‘lines of connection’ and seen to occur in two forms. Firstly there are connections that are clearly defined, in which the categories shared an overtly similar worldview (be it ‘personal/private’ or ‘communal/group’). Secondly there are connections that are less overt and more ancillary in nature in which a connection could potentially exist but was not an intrinsic part of the category’s makeup.

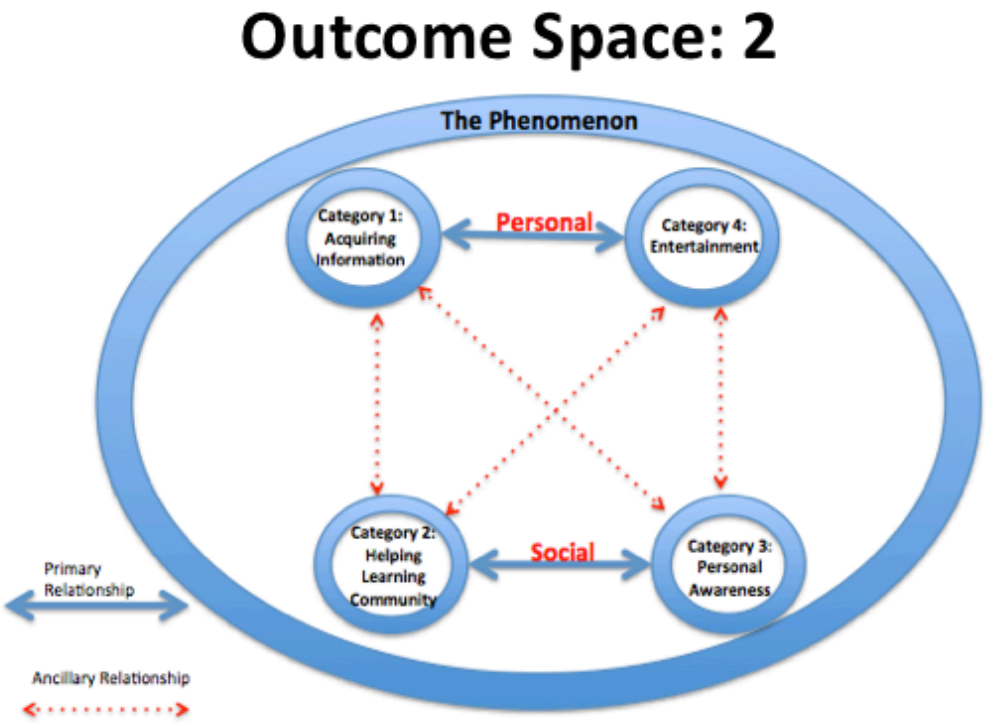


Figure 4.7- Outcome Space 2: the relationship space

As can be seen in Figure 4.7 a clear line of connection exists between categories one and four. Similarly there is another clear line of connection between categories two and three. What is the similarity or connection? With categories one and four there is an emphasis on the individual and on something which is either unique or relates to the person themselves. In both instances there is no mention of using information to achieve something external to the individual. In the first category they are achieving a state of intellectual awareness or understanding through acquisition of information while in the fourth they are achieving entertainment through engaging with the information process. In both instances, while they might have an understanding of a purpose beyond themselves and, certainly in category one there is awareness of an end use for the

information they acquire (to become the best serious leisure practitioner possible), they aren't looking at engaging with a group outside of themselves. Subsequently, the experience of using information to learn is not geared towards ultimately working with or within either a group of their choosing (which would be the learning community) or a group they exist within (the social world).

Similarly, with categories two and three the individual is attaining something, some state of being or position or status, and working within some context (the learning community or society), which is external to them. In category two the focus is on helping the learning community. Obviously, the individual is connected to the learning community as an individual. Subsequently, they gain individual benefits from their membership in that group. However, there is also an awareness of using information for something outside of or external to themselves, such as helping other members of the serious leisure community and securing or safeguarding the future of the serious leisure topic. In category three, where they are dealing with the social world they are aware of using information to help navigate their way through society (in effect safeguarding and securing their own personal future). However, in doing so they are also, in a sense, helping society to function by finding ways in which to work within the parameters that society sets and the expectation/s it has for each person. Subsequently, a key connection and distinction which is evident between the categories is that two (categories two and three) are constituted in relation to groups/communities – one is a learning community and one is a community or society – whereas two (categories one and four) are constituted in relation to the individual.

That said, an argument can be made that category two is constructed by way of an internal rather than external perspective. While a serious leisure activity may include communal elements and people other than the individual it can also be constructed by way of the personal and private relationship the individual has with it. Subsequently, it and any experience it engenders could be considered 'internal'. The social world, on the other hand, is resolutely external to the individual. While their experience of it may affect them in a personal and private fashion the society always exists as a construct external to the individual. They may live within it and be influenced by it but they cannot internalize it whereas their serious leisure activity can be constructed, experienced and engaged with in a purely private fashion and have no affect on anything external to the individual.

That potential disagreement can be seen as an indication of the fluidity that is present in the individual's relationship to their serious leisure activity, something discussed later in this thesis. That fluidity, which is also an ingredient within Experienced Identity does allow for the individual's experience of a phenomenon to be in almost two states at the same time. It also illustrates how complex the individual's relationship is to their serious leisure activity. Not only is it an external agent to which they respond it is also an internally constructed outcrop of the individuals themselves.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has described in detail the four categories - acquiring information, sharing information/helping others, developing awareness (social) and entertainment that emerged from close analysis of the research data. That description has provided detail

regarding the referential and structural aspects of each category, their dimensions of variation and the outcome space that emerges from the trends and patterns that occur across them. Out of those findings, several significant issues have emerged. The following chapter provides a discussion of those issues as well as reflecting on the significance of this study, its place within the existing body of literature devoted to serious leisure and information literacy , and its implications for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the study's findings and how they relate to the current body of literature that exists around serious leisure. Beginning with an overview of the current state of affairs regarding serious leisure research it explains where my study fits within that domain, the gap it fills and its implications for future research within the areas of not only serious leisure but also both information literacy and phenomenography. It will show the value of the work I have undertaken, its uniqueness and significance to both the corresponding research streams and the work presently being undertaken in them, as well as its implications for future research in those arenas and ways of looking at / viewing the research domain into the future.

5.2 Research Gap

Serious leisure research, in its examination of people's leisure pursuits, has provided an understanding of the way in which the average person is able to develop a 'career' and identity that revolves around their self-chosen leisure pursuits (Robinson and Godbey, 1997). That understanding has come, almost exclusively, from studies that have adopted a behavioural perspective (as defined by Case, 2012) of information engagement and focussed, for their research output, on only one aspect of the information agenda, namely information seeking. As a result, the experiential side of the research equation, specifically people's experience of using information (to learn), has been almost wholly

neglected (Hartel, 2003). Despite researchers acknowledging a shortfall in work addressing that side of the information agenda (Kari and Hartel, 2007) work to date has been hampered by several limitations. Chief among those, it would appear, is the lack of a suitable vehicle to drive the research and provide a framework around which the question of information experience can be examined both in detail and by way of an academically rigorous methodology.

5.3 Research Aims

The principle aim of this study has been to fill that gap in knowledge by exploring variation in regard to the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity (within the area of 'heritage'). To that end, information literacy, with its focus on the way in which people "experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them" (Marton, 1986, p.31), was proposed as the most ideal context in which to frame the research and phenomenography, as the most appropriate methodology. That choice represents the first of several significant contributions made by this study. In uniting two distinct disciplines/research areas – Information Literacy and Serious Leisure - a unique opportunity was gained to make significant contributions to both the fields of information literacy and serious leisure while also displaying another avenue through which phenomenography can be used as the methodology of choice. As a result, this becomes the first study of serious leisure to utilise phenomenography as its research methodology as well as the first to recommend and illustrate how a combination of information literacy and phenomenography can fill an important gap in serious leisure scholarship. Similarly, due

to the absence of studies dealing with the information literacy experience of people participating in a serious leisure activity, this paper represents a genuinely original contribution to the currently available literature of and scholarship relating to both the information literacy and serious leisure domains.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the study, drawing as it does on the fields of information literacy and serious leisure the implications, contributions and significance extend beyond just Serious Leisure to also include the field of information literacy and, to a lesser extent, the chosen research methodology of phenomenography. That being the case, the chapter is divided into three sections, each dealing with the contribution the study makes and its implications for future research within the particular field. The first section deals with the research methodology – phenomenography – while the second focuses on the field of Serious Leisure and the third deals with Information Literacy. In addition, a preliminary overview of the major findings of the study is provided, including detail regarding a key dimension to emerge from the work itself and its implications for the study of serious leisure and information literacy.

5.4 A Summary of the Major Findings of this Study

This study began with the aim of exploring the variation that exists in regard to the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity (within the area of 'heritage'). It argued that previous attempts to perform such a task (regardless of the context or area of interest chosen), using systems such as ELIS, have proven unsatisfactory due to their only focussing on elements of the information agenda such as

information seeking. As such they have been unable to account for or consider the information experience of serious leisure participants, an omission this study considers to be significant. As shown during this study and further explained here, those aims have been accomplished. That has been due, in no small part, to this study's advocacy of information literacy as the theoretical base upon which examination of information use by serious leisure participants can be most successfully undertaken. In addition, several unexpected contributions, to the field of serious leisure and information literacy, have also been made and are outlined in the following sections.

5.4.1 Contributions and implications: Serious Leisure

The first contribution to serious leisure, as with information literacy, is that a new piece of research data has been produced. There have been calls by researchers within the field of serious leisure, most notably Robert Stebbins, the originator and chief producer of work within the domain, for more work to be undertaken within the serious leisure arena (Stebbins, 2011; Hartel, 2008; Kari and Hartel, 2007). A principle reason being that, due to a lack of funds within their arena, it was important to encourage other faculties to find ways in which to examine serious leisure. Similarly, Kari and Hartel (2007) acknowledged a serious shortfall in work that addresses the information agenda. This paper, coming from the discipline of Library and Information Sciences (Information Ecology) and focussing on the information experience of Serious Leisure participants represents both of those things. In taking an interdisciplinary approach to examining serious leisure the belief has been that not only could this work advance the field but it would both introduce elements to the field of Serious Leisure which have been missing

and help to fill gaps in serious leisure research by way of using approaches and adopting attitudes which are commonplace within LIS but which have not been part of the serious leisure research landscape.

Those were not the only contributions made by this research. Indeed, this work can be distinguished from previous studies within the field of serious leisure by five key points. Firstly, the study does not only focus on only one topic or area of serious leisure engagement. On the contrary, it looks across the entire field of serious leisure, in relation to 'Heritage' based serious leisure activity, in order to make a statement that is applicable to the research domain in general and not merely one part of it in particular. Secondly, unlike other studies within the serious leisure domain, there is no gender bias in regard to the research participants. As can be seen in the Appendix, there was an equal 50/50 split between men and women interviewed within the course of this study. Similarly, as there is no focus on one particular research activity there is also no bias in regard to who might be more inclined to engage in that activity, whether male or female. This study selected its participants from those people operating within what was deemed to be a 'heritage' area. That particular area of operation was not seen to favour or privilege one gender over another. Indeed, it was considered broad enough in scope to provide multiple outlets for both genders, something that did prove to be the case. Given that gender bias is a contentious issue within serious leisure studies (Lo Verde, Modi & Cappello, 2011; Raisborough, 1999, 2006, 2007) it is significant that this study worked to ensure that such bias was not a factor A third point of distinction is that, unlike the overwhelming majority of serious leisure research, the participants within this study were sourced from a

relatively broad age range (Wheaton & Tomlinson, 1998; Bartram, 2001; Gibson et al, 2002). In general it appears a bias has occurred, in favour of participants in the 50+ age bracket potentially due to an assumption that suitable candidates, in order to display the longevity and time-related immersion in an activity required for a serious leisure pursuit, will necessarily be of an advanced age (Stebbins, 1997, 2001). This study has shown that assumption to be erroneous and, as such, was able to include a significant number of suitably qualified participants within the 30-50 years old age range. Each of those two distinctions – age and gender – were very deliberate attempts to address the criticism of serious leisure research that it focuses almost exclusively on white, Western, middle-class males in the 50+ age bracket. While it was not possible to address the issue of ethnicity it is still highly significant that this study managed to overcome the age and gender bias which has been part of much serious leisure research to date (Heuser, 2005; Stalp, 2006; Dilley & Scraton, 2010).

A further point of distinction, mentioned earlier but deserving of individual recognition, is that this study focuses on making a statement about the field of serious leisure in its entirety, not merely on locating another area or activity in which serious leisure is being engaged with. Where that is significant is that the data uncovered and the patterns that have emerged explain much about the experience of all people (generally speaking) who engage in a serious leisure activity and not merely those who are engaged in one specific area. In order for the field to grow it needs to examine itself holistically (Stebbins, 2011) and this study provides a means by which that can be done. Similarly, the more inclusive nature of this research, with its lack of bias regarding gender and age (Dilley & Scraton,

2010; Lo Verde, Modi & Cappello, 2011; Raisborough, 1999, 2006, 2007), means that its data and conclusions are accessible to a wider audience. Where other studies may be discounted as irrelevant due to those biases, this research provides a forum that can be engaged with and utilised without the concern that it only speaks to and for a specific sector of the serious leisure population.

The final of the five initial contributions made by this study relates to its focus on information experience rather than information behaviour. To date, studies dealing with information and serious leisure have focussed primarily on Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) (Hartel, 2003, 2007; Kari & Hartel, 2007; Fulton, 2009; Lee & Trace, 2009; Stebbins, 2013; Spurgin, 2008). Where ELIS is concerned only with the \endeavour of information seeking, this research has expanded its scope considerably to incorporate concerns relating to learning (which is not mentioned within ELIS) and the relationship the individual has to the information within their learning environment. As a result, when dealing with the area of information literacy, ELIS constitutes it only as a concept that deals with the way in which individuals acquire information (Hartel, 2003, 2007; Stebbins, 2011, 2013). This research, on the other hand, does not elevate behaviour above cognition nor does it, as is the case with ELIS, focus only on information practices that occur within 'life challenging situations' (where information is needed in order for the person to continue functioning within their society). On the contrary, the research contained within this thesis, in adopting a referential, experiential approach, examines all of the situations in which the individual's life is affected by their relationship to information.

The significance of that final point is highlighted by critical reception (Schaffer, 2013) to a recently published text by Robert Stebbins, the most senior researcher in the field of serious leisure. Stebbins' recent book, *The Committed Reader* (2013) is framed by what he considers to be Library and Information Science (LIS) and the Serious Leisure Perspective. However, as has been pointed out by critics, most notably Schaffer, (2013), what Stebbins has delivered is primarily taxonomic in nature. As such, while it manages to provide an interesting list of approaches to his specific LIS topic – motivations for reading – it fails to deliver an understanding of the experiential aspect that is vital to an understanding of the interplay between the individual and their information world. That interplay being essential to the field of LIS – not to mention the areas of serious leisure and information literacy - which Stebbins believes his work to be framed by. In addition, as Schaffer (2013) points out, as a sociological text, Stebbins work is missing the key ingredient of the 'social'. The work presented within this paper, on the other hand, manages to draw out the significance of the social to the individual while also presenting an experiential account of their relationship with their information world. That missing social element is very much to the fore in this paper. The experiential element, similarly absent within *The Committed Reader*, is also front and centre within this paper. That is, two key omissions of the most senior member within the field of serious leisure are rectified within this thesis, which I argue indicates its contribution to the field of serious leisure research.

Schaffer's criticism of Stebbins (and *The Committed Reader* was only published in 2013 so the work is not only fresh, it is fully representative of current thinking) indicates there is dissatisfaction with the status quo and a new approach may be welcomed. The work I

have presented in this thesis, through its use of phenomenography as research methodology and adoption of a relational rather than behavioural perspective, goes a long way towards addressing and making redundant that dissatisfaction. Indeed, this work shows researchers how they might fill those gaps in knowledge – which lead to dissatisfaction with the status quo.

That being the case, one of the most significant implications of this study is that it provides a blueprint for further research. In order to overcome the limitations of the previous studies, and their failure to address the nature of experience within serious leisure engagement this study can be followed and copied as a way of addressing that lack. I have been able to show that there is a significant experiential dimension to serious leisure engagement. If that had been in doubt previously, this study dispels that line of thought. Subsequently, one of the major implications of this thesis is that it sets a precedent for future serious leisure studies. The experiential cannot be ignored in future works (unless they only set themselves to show information behaviours) if a researcher is attempting to make a statement about serious leisure in general.

Indeed, just as this study needed to be mindful of the work that had preceded it, even though that work had adopted a behavioural perspective, future works will need to address the issues raised within this study. While there may be disagreement with certain of the contentions made, it cannot be ignored that they have been established using a valid research methodology and adhering to strict academic guidelines. Subsequently, the study of Serious Leisure has been broadened and expanded significantly by this work. In so doing, it has established new opportunities for researchers. Indeed, future works may

seek to unite the behavioural and relational perspectives in one study to provide a more holistic account of serious leisure. They may look to examine serious leisure from a previously unrelated discipline, such as this study has done or they may, like this study has done, challenge the conventions of serious leisure in order to further develop the research domain and move it away from the limitations imposed by a purely behavioural perspective.

Ultimately, what this study has done is grow the research field and increase its scope. Previously, serious leisure had somewhat tentatively dipped its toes into the waters of LIS. With this study it has been shown that it can be firmly grounded within that arena as well as within the areas of education (via the use of information literacy). While no claims were made that serious leisure belongs to a research domain outside of the social sciences, this study has shown how it can be approached from a wide variety of vantage points. It has also, I argue, established the primacy of the individual within serious leisure. While that may not be a completely new concept – Stebbins having produced a recent work dealing with 'Serious Leisure and Individuality' (2013) – it is firmly established within this thesis. The group element of serious leisure engagement is not challenged but it is shown that the individual drives their serious leisure involvement for his or her own purposes. Therefore, when future research looks at serious leisure participants it will need to ensure it does so from a point that does not automatically privilege the group above the individual. That is where the focus on information experience becomes so significant and where its omission, until this thesis, has been so glaring.

Also, if the existence of Experienced Identity (as outlined previously in this thesis) and its potentially fluid nature is acknowledged and accepted then this study has raised an important question regarding prior classification of leisure activities. If a person's observable engagement (participation) can cease, or change to the point where, due to their lack of continuous participation, they might no-longer be considered serious leisure participants, but they remain, in their own mind, intimately identified with the serious leisure activity (and no less a part of its community despite their lack of participation) then much of what is deemed to be 'casual leisure' may in fact be serious leisure functioning in a non-linear way. That is to say, while there may be chronological breaks between observable participation/engagement with the serious leisure activity, what is unobservable to anyone but the individuals themselves is that there is no gap in continuous experienced identity (revolving around the serious leisure activity). What has changed is that the individual's experienced identity may have shifted from 'active participant' to 'inert or dormant participant'. However, they still see themselves as being part of the serious leisure activity, albeit in hiatus.

That is of particular importance to the way in which serious leisure participants are currently classified. As suggested, what may be considered 'casual leisure' in one situation or looked upon as the individual disengaging with their serious leisure activity may in fact be merely a non-active, non-participatory phase within the serious leisure life cycle. The individual's engagement is no less 'serious', however, it has changed in nature. Therefore, with that being a possibility, researchers will need to pay greater attention to the experiential element within serious leisure engagement. Subsequently,

when assessing whether or not an individual is engaged in a serious leisure activity more emphasis will need to be placed on their identification with the activity, rather than their longevity. While time may continue to be of importance it needs to be given less emphasis

That will allow researchers to include more studies that deal with younger people as serious leisure participants. If emphasis is placed upon duration of engagement then, naturally, people under a certain age will be less likely to present as suitable research candidates than those of a more advanced age and at a different stage of the overall life cycle. Similarly, people who, due to external factors (such as job, family, culture, community), are unable to engage with an activity over a continuous, un-broken period of time, may be excluded from studies due to their inability to display continuous engagement with an activity despite retaining an experienced identity informed by and revolving around their serious leisure activity. With an emphasis on experienced identity and an appreciation of the fluid nature of engagement with a serious leisure activity (such as seasonal engagement) they will not be overlooked and the research domain will be richer for their inclusion.

Similarly, if the primacy of Experienced Identity (within the qualities necessary for serious leisure participation) is established then it may give us a way of answering questions raised regarding what does and does not constitute a serious leisure activity. As an example, Chris Rojek (1999, 2009, 2012, 2013) has suggested that deviant activities such as ‘serial killer’ (he used the examples of Fred and Rosemary West) could be seen

as a form of serious leisure participation. Rojek (2012) refers to those abnormal or 'dark leisures' as being "a totally legitimate area of knowledge for us to look at in leisure studies, to look at such behaviours not so much as deviance but another form of leisure" (Rojek in Blackshaw, 2012, p.319). According to Rojek, any controversy caused by an examination of those leisure forms is not only warranted, it is necessary and that "if the discipline wants to be regarded as a mature discipline, then it has to take on everything rather than just areas of enquiry that confirm the ideological dogma that reinforces what the discipline is constituted under" (Blackshaw, 2012. p335).

Using Experienced Identity it could be argued that Rojek might be right if the individual/s could be seen to be aware of a particular identity (an Experienced Identity) during the time they were undertaking or engaged with their particular activity. If they were acting on a compulsion (to kill people) then it could argue that they are not 'experiencing an identity' but are, rather, acting on impulse and compulsion. Their lack of awareness of an identity revolving around their actions would suggest they are engaged in, at best, 'project based leisure' (if, indeed, you can call what they are doing a 'leisure' activity). However, if they engage with the activity in a way that sees them being aware of some identity emerging from their engagement with the activity (their notion of an identity would not necessarily be 'serial killer' – it only needs to be an identity they are able to experience while undertaking their activity) then it can be suggested that Rojek is correct and their form of deviant activity (that is, 'deviant' in a non-judgmental fashion and as merely something which deviates from the socially accepted norm) could constitute a serious leisure activity. Of course, it would also need to

consist of other elements, as laid out by Stebbins, such as learning, perseverance, effort and unique ethos. It can then be suggested that if participants in a serious leisure activity "tend to identify strongly with their chosen pursuits" (Stebbins, 2004, p.53)" and that identification evolves through "substantial emotional, moral and often physical investment" (Elkington, 2011, p.334) then what emerges from that investment and identification is Experienced Identity.

If a serious leisure activity is examined from a purely behavioural perspective then it will be possible for identity to be ascribed by someone other than the serious leisure participant as (within a behavioural perspective) the elements of identification will be quantifiable. However, in adopting an experiential perspective and privileging Experienced Identity over behaviourally constructed identity, the matter of identification will rest with the person engaged with the serious leisure activity. That will mean researchers examining a potential site of serious leisure engagement will not be able to construct identity for the participants (or ascertain that identity is being constructed) on the basis that those participants identify closely with the activity. On the contrary, any understanding they develop of a constituent identity (or identities) will be determined by the participants themselves. Researchers may classify or categorise the serious leisure activity and those involved in it; however, any identity emerging from that involvement will need to be constructed (via experience) by the participants themselves. Therefore, in determining that an individual is engaged in a serious leisure activity the researcher will need to establish the presence of an Experienced Identity within the participant's awareness.

That is not merely, as Stebbins suggests, identification with their chosen activity but, rather, an identity that emerges from their experience with the activity/area of interest. The difference between identification and Experienced Identity may seem merely semantic but it is significant. Identification with the activity suggests merely a deep association with the topic being engaged with. Experienced Identity, on the other hand, suggests the emergence of an identity that is unique to the individual but arising from their engagement with and involvement in their serious leisure activity.

5.4.2 Contributions and implications: Information Literacy

It was anticipated that this study would show that information literacy provides one of the most suitable theoretical bases upon which to examine serious leisure. That would, in turn, help to fill gaps in scholarship that had arisen due to information literacy's research focus having been on information behaviour at the expense of information experience. The potential was for the study to say something about the field of serious leisure specifically, by way of information literacy. It was further anticipated that any contributions to the field of information literacy would come from adding a further piece of literature to the IL field and producing a work that examined relational information literacy within a previously unstudied context (Serious Leisure as a whole as well as specifically within the Heritage context). Certainly, that has occurred and this study can be seen as a unique addition to the field of scholarly literature dealing with information literacy and another example of the way in which IL can be used to examine a vast range

of research interests. In that regard, the paper makes a novel and palpable contribution. However, aside from adding to the body of literature dealing with IL (and illustrating IL's value as an academic domain), there was no expectation that this research would uncover some hitherto unknown aspect of information literacy itself. Fortunately, that has not proven to be the case and one particular aspect of this study has emerged as a valid and valuable contribution to the field of IL research. That contribution deals with what I have called 'cross-contextuality'.

To date, when information literacy studies have been conducted they have fallen into one of three contexts - educational, professional or community based information literacy. While certain studies may have had the potential to display some overlap between categories no attempt was made by researchers to engage with that phenomenon, if indeed they were aware of it or even considered it possible for such overlap to occur. With this study, whoever, that situation is quite different. In choosing to examine serious leisure I have engaged with a topic that can be seen to fall across more than one context at the same time. That overlap, which I call cross-contextuality, occurs not over merely two of the three categories but, potentially, all of them simultaneously. That is, therefore, a wholly new contribution to the field of information literacy and represents not only a unique finding but also a new set of possibilities for information literacy research.

The primary implication for information literacy comes by way of the opportunity 'cross-contextuality' offers to IL research. Not only does it provide a new avenue through which research can be conducted and not only does it alert researchers to the possibility that

their own work may be contextually more complex than they had originally thought (or conceived their work as being) but it increases the value and usefulness of information literacy as a research domain. What it does is provide a means by which information literacy can be shown to have greater value and reach than had previously been imagined. That being the case, future research programmes, aware of the cross-contextual possibilities of information literacy, can 'sell' their research (to those agencies which will fund research projects) as having the potential to examine multiple dimensions of society. In possessing that potential and flexibility it has greater value both to the researcher and to those funding their research.

Outside of the fiscal implications cross-contextuality also broadens researchers understanding of the way/s in which information literacy can be understood. When future studies are undertaken researchers will be aware that, while their focus may be on information literacy within a specific context there is still the possibility of overlap and that must be taken into account. As a result, they will need to examine whether or not overlap does occur and, if so, they will need to either address it within their research or explain why they chose to omit it. In either case, ascertaining the presence or absence of cross-contextuality will need to become an integral part of future studies. Similarly, the potential for cross-contextuality will influence the way in which researchers look at their research subjects. Rather than seeing them as being relatively one-dimensional (in that their information literacy experience occurs only within one context) they will need to see them as being potentially influenced by multiple contexts. That means, the way in which information literacy functions or is experienced within one context may be directly

related to and influenced by the way in which it is experienced within another context (or contexts). The individual, while being examined within one research arena (context) has been shown to carry the potential for operating across multiple contexts during the course of their information literacy experience. Subsequently, researchers will need to account for that possibility and test to see whether or not what they are observing is the product of one or multiple contexts.

In addition, the learning conception of information literacy (as opposed to information literacy within is now positioned as the most suitable way in which to examine serious leisure. The cross-contextual nature of information literacy, as established by this study, matches with the fluid nature of Experienced Identity, also established by this study, which has been shown to be the hallmark of the serious leisure participant. That, in turn, opens up a new research domain to the information literacy academic and, by exchange, his or her counterpart within the field of serious leisure.

5.4.3 Experienced Identity

One of the most interesting and significant contributions to emerge from and be made by this study is 'Experienced Identity'. In writing the Findings Chapter doubts began to form regarding one of the dimension of variation. Originally it had been thought that, as had been the case with other studies within the information literacy sphere (Harding, 2011; Yates, 2012), the participants within this study could be seen as adopting 'roles' in regard to their information literacy experience. However, on reflection it was determined that the

term ‘role’ was unsuitable to this study and did not accurately reflect the phenomenon under observation. To that end, ‘Experienced Identity’ was substituted the term ‘role’.

An ‘experienced identity’ differs from a ‘role’ in that a role is a behaviour artificially adopted by or imposed upon an individual which determines the way in which they behave within a particular situation. A ‘role’ suggests a form of behaviour that has been adopted. It is artificial, it does not happen organically and, when talking about someone performing a particular role, taking on or adopting a role what is being referred to is a way of behaving. ‘Experienced identity’, on the other hand, emerges naturally from the experience an individual has of a particular phenomenon. It is not alien to the individual but is, rather, organically representative of their experience of the phenomenon in question. Whereas a ‘role’ demands a particular way of acting/behaving, ‘Experienced Identity, on the other hand, provides a way of seeing oneself and being seen by others (in relation to a particular context or set of circumstances). Therefore, one is behavioural in nature (‘role’) while the other is experiential (‘experienced identity’). The distinction is subtle but powerful and significant.

5.4.3.1 Contribution to and implications for Serious Leisure

According to Stebbins, a person engaged in a serious leisure activity creates an alternative identity (alternate to the one determined for them by their social location, occupation, family, relationships and other societal factors) that revolves around their serious leisure area of interest. That process of identification evolves through “substantial emotional, moral and often physical investment” (Elkington, 2011, p.334) and it can

occur as the personal and interpersonal (social) level (Brown, 2007; Gibson et al, 2002; Green & Jones, 2005; Yair, 1992). Identity is, therefore, an already recognised component of Serious Leisure. However, current serious leisure research has been criticised for neglecting the importance of social identification and failing to recognise that serious leisure can provide its participants with strong, positive and enduring social identities of their own choosing (Jones, 2000). Subsequently, the notion of identity, as it relates to serious leisure, is seriously under-explored to the point where little significant work has been done which deals with it (Jones, 2000). Indeed, for critics such as Jones, the 'career' dimension of serious leisure is not as important as the under-realised dimension of social identity.

Experienced Identity, as outlined by this study, provides the means by which that dimension can be examined and provides an outlet through which to explain (and examine) the non-behavioural relationships/s and engagement/s an individual has with their serious leisure area of interest. However, where it differs from Jones' focus on the group aspect of a person's social identity is in its ability to accommodate both a personal, private space as well as a group setting. Similarly, where Orr (2006) saw identity as being driven by an individual's serious leisure activity, Experienced Identity shows that serious leisure is only one of the factors at play and does not take precedence over the individual's sense of self. Resultantly, any notions of belonging to a group, culture, society or other structure do not regiment Experienced Identity and it does not, therefore, constitute identity along only social lines. On the contrary, it emanates from the individual regardless of the setting or context in which they are operating. To that end,

there will be an Experienced Identity that is informed by the group or social world. However, there will also be an Experienced Identity that does not revolve around belonging to a social group. The issues of self-worth, self-image and self-esteem that are of paramount importance to serious leisure scholars (Tajfel, 1972, 1981, 1982; Tajfel &Turner, 1979, 1986; Brown, 1986, 1988; Jones, 2006) will be accommodated by Experienced identity but it will provide a way in which to look beyond merely the individual's selection of and placement within a group of their choosing. Experienced Identity will provide a way in which to give equal weight to the individual's individuality as well as their conformity or uniformity.

None of that is intended to dismiss Stebbins' notion of a leisure career. On the contrary, it fits with that understanding yet provides a way in which to explain how the individual moves through their stages of serious leisure involvement (awareness of the activity, engaging with the concept behind the activity, involvement in the pursuit or performance of the activity and creation of an alternative identity which revolves around the activity). Indeed, Experienced Identity provides a way in which to explain what occurs during the cross-over between Amateur, Hobbyist and Career Volunteer types of serious leisure engagement. It is readily acknowledged that serious leisure participants may at any one time belong to more than one of those outlets (Stebbins, 1997, 2006; Hartel, 2007; Spurgin, 2008; Shen & Yarnel, 2010). Indeed, Unruh (1980) has suggested that a person's engagement with the serious leisure 'social world' is differentiated by their mode of activity - which he defines as stranger, tourist, insider or regular. However, while Unruh has conceived of a typology there has been no experiential way of

examining what happens during that period of mobility. Experienced Identity provides the means by which an examination can occur. Such an understanding will not only advance the field of Serious Leisure but will have implications for information literacy as well in regard to the cross-contextuality of information literacy arenas.

Experienced identity, it can be suggested, operates at each level or stage. What changes or develops, as the individual moves through the various stages of serious leisure involvement, is not simply their modes of engagement (Stebbins, 2001;Hartel, 2010) but also their Experienced Identity. At each stage they experience a different level of involvement and their Experienced Identity, which will culminate in the development of their serious leisure 'career', will grow and change along with that involvement. As a result, what develops, as the individual moves through the various stage of serious leisure involvement (Stebbins, 2001), is their Experienced Identity. That is what is been seen when examining the path taken by serious leisure participants from awareness of an activity to developing a career and identity that revolves around their serious leisure activity. To understand that would help future serious leisure researchers by alerting them to an existing and examinable phenomenon, namely the lifecycle of the Experienced Identity as opposed to merely the serious leisure lifecycle.

At present, when identity and serious leisure are discussed it is done so from the point of view that identity is essentially the final stage of engagement with a serious leisure activity. That is, the individual will, according to Stebbins, develop a unique identity that revolves around their serious leisure activity (Stebbins, 1980, 1982, 1992, 1994, 1997,

1998, 2001, 2002, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2013). It is, essentially, an outcome of their taking a leisure activity to the point where it becomes more than a passing interest and forms an on-going site of SL engagement. However, what Experienced Identity shows is that the individual is constantly in a state of identity development from the time when they first become aware of a leisure activity to the point where they develop a 'career' that revolves around it. That being the case Experienced Identity, within serious leisure, is multi-dimensional in that it develops and changes throughout the course of time the individual is engaged with their SL area of interest. Similarly, Experienced Identity can and most likely will vary from one individual to another (with some contextual similarities) even if they were engaged in the exact same SL activity and all other elements (longevity, demographics and other similar factors) were the same. In addition, the Experienced Identity will change and evolve even when the individual has reached the final stage of serious leisure engagement and has developed a 'career' revolving around their serious leisure activity. Therefore, it may be possible for researchers to examine the way in which that change or evolution takes place within all stages of the serious leisure lifecycle.

Similarly, those studies which have examined change throughout the serious leisure lifecycle have done so only in regard to modes of participation or ways in which participants operate at different stages of the lifecycle (Stebbins, 2001;Hartel, 2010; Kuhlthau, 1993). In each case the perspective adopted has been behavioural, which differs markedly from the relational perspective that characterises Experienced Identity. While previous findings have suggested that leisure preferences change over time and

throughout a specific 'leisure life cycle' (Iso-Ahola, Jackson & Dunn, 1994) no mention is made of the way in which the individual's understanding of themselves or the identity they ascribe for themselves may change. Experienced Identity fills that gap (which appears to be more a gap of awareness than one of omission) but also supports the contention that as preferences change so too does the identity which the individual experiences. Experienced Identity exists without a change in leisure preferences but it also exists during that time of change. Subsequently it provides added depth to any studies that examine the life cycle of a leisure participant and, indeed, it can be argued that researchers stand to gain more by understanding the way in which people see themselves and feel about themselves (their Experienced Identity) at various points in their leisure 'career' than to simply chart their change of preferences as it relates to their leisure activities. All of that will, in turn, establish a new area of study for the Serious Leisure discipline and constitutes a further contribution made by this study to the area of serious leisure research.

5.4.3.2 Contribution to and implications for information literacy

While less clear than it was with serious leisure, Experienced Identity can make a contribution to the field of information literacy. If it can be understood that a person's experience of information literacy is determined by the particular context in which they are operating (workplace, educational, community or across multiple contexts) it can be suggested that their Experienced Identity will play a significant part in determining their information literacy experience. To that end, the context is the situation in which the

person is operating (their serious leisure social world/learning community, the social world at large, outside of their serious leisure activity or other type of world – workplace, educational, community) but the subtext, that thing the individual brings to their encounter with a phenomenon could be their Experienced Identity. The question raised is whether the Experienced Identity emerges from their encounter with the phenomenon (which necessitates their engagement with information literacy) or if it (the Experienced Identity) is something they bring to bear on the serious leisure encounter. This thesis argues that identity precedes the encounter. The person is experiencing their world in a particular way and configuring him or herself in a particular fashion (or within certain guidelines that determine their identity). Subsequently, when they engage with information literacy it will be informed by the Experienced Identity they bring to bear on any IL encounter.

The contribution that makes, to future research, has the potential to be significant. While, as stated, the concept seems minor it is far more than a case of quibbling over syntax or semantics. What this thesis is proposing is a convention, to be used in future research, which will help guide the researchers view of their subject's experience of and with information. Instead of utilising a term ('role') which carries with it behavioural implications this thesis proposes use of one (Experienced Identity) which is far more suitable for experiential, relational studies (such as this one) and which does not suggest, through the connotations it carries within standard language, that behaviour takes primacy over cognition.

5.4.4 Contributions and implications: Phenomenography

In regard to the method of data analysis proposed in this research there is a certain implication for phenomenography as a field. Since its inception in the early 1980's there has been general discomfort with the replicability of results generated within a phenomenographic study. The argument is that data generated only accounts for the relationship that exists between the interviewer and their interview subjects. Subsequently, the relationship between the subject and the phenomenon in question (which should be the aim of a phenomenographic study) is not accounted for. Due to that reliance on the interviewer-interviewee relationship the study cannot be replicated by anyone outside of that original setting. Lacking replicability, which is considered to be the "common criterion for measuring the extent to which the research results are reliable" (Sandberg, 1997, p.2004), they can be seen to lack credibility and validity. While it can't be expected that the original findings can be re-discovered, in toto, outside of their original context, there is the expectation that the categories that emerge will approximate those generated by other researchers.

In response to that concern, Bowden (1992) has suggested a method called 'interjudge agreement' which is essentially having more than one researcher work on data analysis – operating as a means by which one can check the work of the other. However, Sandberg, despite being a critic of phenomenographic reliability and validity, believes that interjudge reliability is not a suitable solution due to its inherently objectivist nature (Sandberg, 1997).

While my analytic method does not provide a solution to that discord it does offer a way in which researchers can work around such a complex issue. Sandberg suggests that replicability is the criterion for measuring reliability; however, failing to achieve that (which this study has just established is a problem for phenomenographic research) I would suggest that verifiability can be a worthwhile substitute. My method of data analysis requires the researcher to follow several logical steps beginning with transcription of interviews through to the point at which they begin to establish categories of description. In making those steps overt and placing them within a format (Excel and PowerPoint) which can be easily presented I have proposed a way in which the researcher show the logical flow of their analysis if need be. No other researcher is required to check the work in order for categories of description and dimensions of variation to be established. However, should the need arise, they will be able to present, if required, the logical flow of their analysis process. While it retains its qualitative essence, it is not unlike a mathematician providing the logical path of their work or an engineer showing the logical flow of their design. Ultimately, if validity and reliability are of importance and no agreement can be reached on a uniform means by which to ensure replicability then verifiability, in which the researchers flow of logic is given precedence, could offer a potential alternative.

5.5 Limitations and Scope of this study

In a typical phenomenographic study, “the number of participants should be sufficient to yield adequately rich descriptions of the varying conceptions which, together, comprise

the phenomenon" (Bruce, 1997, p.94). Sandberg (1994) suggests that approximately twenty participants will be enough to achieve that result. This study has adhered to that formula with an overall sample size of 23 participants. The rationale for selection of participants is outlined elsewhere in this document. Geographically, the study has obtained its respondents from those people involved in serious leisure pursuits judged to be within the realm of 'heritage' (as defined by this study) and living within the Australian regions of Melbourne and Brisbane. While that omits a significant part of the national population it nonetheless provides more than enough diversity to overcome any concerns regarding homogeneity among respondents. No attempt was made to include an ethnically diverse range of interview subjects. While that might be catered for by future studies it was not deemed to be relevant for this particular work. Similarly, a larger sample size could be introduced for future studies. However, as stated, the number used within this study is consistent with the tenets of phenomenographic research. A longitudinal study may also provide some interesting additions or even contrast to the work done within this study, however, given the time constraints of this project (contained with a three year PhD programme) it was not appropriate at this time. Indeed, while a longitudinal study would be useful in tracking the way in which Experienced Identity changes throughout the course of a person's engagement with the serious leisure activity, it was not needed to identity that Experienced Identity takes place. That said, it does provide an opportunity for future research and also a combined research project that examines Experienced Identity and the serious leisure life cycle.

5.6 Future Directions for Research

This study has identified gaps that exist in current serous leisure research and taken the first steps towards redressing that imbalance. It has shown how those gaps can be filled as well as uncovering previously unknown elements of the research domains revolving around serious leisure, information literacy and phenomenography. Having established that Experienced Identity exists as a concept within Serious Leisure and that information literacy can occur in a cross-contextual fashion more work is needed. That work will include further research dealing with those findings, to reinforce the work done within this study and to test the claims it has made. It will look at the limits of Experienced Identity and all of the factors that will influence how it is experienced, under what conditions and contexts it can be experienced and what the implications are regarding its existence as an observable phenomenon. Similarly, having established that SL offers a viable research area in which the cross-contextual possibilities of information literacy can be examined, more work needs to be done to see what other research domains or outlets will allow researchers to witness similar cross-contextuality. Further research also needs to be done to establish whether or not there is any link between the mobility and fluidity of Experienced Identity within Serious Leisure and the cross-contextuality of information literacy. Looking at each of the research domains separately the following recommendations can be made:

5.6.1 Serious Leisure

Prior to this study a behavioural perspective of information literacy has driven research into serious leisure (i.e. information seeking). As a result there is a complete absence of

work that addresses the experiential perspective as it relates to serious leisure. This study has established the value of research that adopts a relational perspective. It has also shown that such studies are needed if serious leisure as a research domain is to continue to develop. That being the case, the most pressing requirement is that more studies be undertaken which, like this one, adopt a relational perspective of information literacy and seek to examine the information experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity.

In regard to this study specifically, there is no need to add more participants as a means by which to increase the validity of its findings. On the contrary, it has more than enough to satisfy the requirements of a phenomenographic study. However, what is needed is for further studies to be undertaken which complement the serious leisure space this study operates in (heritage) as well as ones which focus on different areas (geographically as well as theoretically) of serious leisure engagement. International studies or, at least, studies with international participants are needed to further the work that has been established within this study. If a genuine statement is to be made about the field of serious leisure in general then it can only be done by way of studies that examine the information experience of people operating within different contexts. There is a need to see if the findings that have emerged within this study can be replicated or repudiated when other contexts and other researchers turn their attention to similar material. There is also a need to see if the findings are commensurate with those which would occur if the interview cohort were from another country or even regions within different countries.

Another area of future research is to see if it is possible to create a study that combines

both a relational and a behavioural perspective. That may entail two separate researchers (or research teams) examining the same phenomenon with one adopting a relational perspective and the other adopting a behavioural perspective and then coming together to position their results as an overall study of behaviour and experience. That would not require merging the results to form one hybrid perspective (although it would be good if that could be achieved) but, rather, presenting a study that divided the information agenda into that which is behavioural and that which is experiential. Similarly, the opportunity does exist to examine the information agenda within serious leisure by way of socio-cultural theory and see how such a work can be positioned in relation to studies that adopt a behavioural and a relational perspective.

5.6.2 Information Literacy

In regard to information literacy the principle task of future research will be to examine and test the notion of cross-contextuality that has been presented within this study. It has not been claimed that information literacy is always cross-contextual in nature. However, the question needs to be asked 'when' is it cross-contextual? To that end, further research needs to be conducted which locates those sites or situations in which information literacy can be seen to entail more than one context simultaneously.

5.6.3 Experienced Identity

The concept of Experienced Identity was one of the most significant things to emerge from this study. Although Experienced Identity is not a new concept, having an

established presence within the field of psychology, it is not something that has previously been addressed in relation to either serious leisure or information literacy. That being the case, further research needs to be done to develop and examine the concept in relation to those two research domains. Examination of the work done within the field of psychology will be necessary in order to see how that discipline understands the concept and what can be taken from it and applied to the fields of serious leisure and information literacy.

5.7 Conclusion

This study has presented a unique and complex picture of the information literacy experience of people engaged in a serious leisure activity. That experience, which encompasses the way in which serious leisure participants use information in order to learn, is something that has, until now, been inaccessible to and overlooked by researchers who have, consciously or not, adopted a behavioural approach in their examination of the serious leisure domain. This study fills that gap and, in so doing, makes several significant contributions to the fields of serious leisure, information literacy and, to a minor extent, phenomenography (the research methodology which guides this study). Although much is still to be achieved, if information experience can be truly brought to the same preeminence (within the serious leisure academic community) as information behaviour, this study has taken the first genuinely significant step towards redressing that imbalance and providing the sort of variation in understanding which is the hallmark of leisure activities, information literacy practices and phenomenographic research.

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APPENDICES

Pilot Study Phase One

Appendix A

Interviewees for Stage 1 of Piloting – Gender and Age

Total: 5

1. Female 44
2. Male 60
3. Female 51
4. Male 53
5. Male 38

Appendix B

Organisations interviewees sourced from:

1. Queensland Maritime Museum
2. Opera Queensland
3. Queensland Art Gallery
4. Queensland Museum and the
5. Queensland Gallery of Modern Art

Appendix C

Heritage contexts (respectively) and tasks performed by interviewee within that context. Phase 1 Pilot Study

1. **Queensland Maritime Museum.** A range of activities that include researching history of museum artefacts as well as repair and restoration of artefacts. This is the most volunteer-driven organisation that I dealt with. Apart from a very small band of paid employees (all part-time, all retirees) the rest of the staff are volunteers and all perform more than one task.

   Interviewee: Male 60

2. **Opera Queensland.** Creating displays to promote upcoming and current productions as well as creating displays to promote Opera Qld itself.

   Interviewee: Male 53

3. **Queensland Art Gallery.** Leads tours of artworks in Qld Gallery of Modern Art also assists on information desk.

   Interviewee: Female 51

4. **Queensland Museum.** Assisting museum curator in researching history and provenance of artefacts.

   Interviewee: Male 38

5. **Queensland Gallery of Modern Art.** Leads tours of the gallery as well as working with gallery staff dealing specifically with art from the Asia-Pacific region.

   Interviewee: Female 44

Appendix D

Serious Leisure interest of interviewees (respectively)

1. Maritime history, specifically Australian maritime history and, in particular, boats and ships used by Australian personnel during WWII.
2. Costume design, specifically costume design within Australian operatic productions and by Australian opera performers
3. Australian impressionists in particular female artists working in the impressionist style (primarily: artist Jane Sutherland).
4. Australian Aboriginal history, in particular the history of Qld tribes.
5. Asian Pacific art

Appendix E

Interviewees for Stage 2 of Piloting – Gender and Age

Total: 3

1. Female 43
2. Male 58
3. Female 38

Appendix F

Organisations interviewees sourced from:

1. Ipswich Art Gallery
2. West End Historical Society
3. Samford District Historical Museum Society

Appendix G

Heritage contexts (respectively) and tasks performed by interviewee within that context.

1. **Ipswich Art Gallery.** Leads tours of artworks in Ipswich gallery, including children's and schools activities.

   Interviewee: Female 43

2. **West End Historical Society.** Researches and collates information relating to the people, news and history of the West End district of South Brisbane. Also contributes to the writing of a group newsletter and assists other researchers and interested parties in finding information about the West End community.

   Interviewee: Male 58

3. **Samford District Historical Society Museum.** Assists in leading of museum tours as well as researching history of the Samford district and contributing to historical society publications.

   Interviewee: Female 38

Appendix H

Serious Leisure interest of interviewees (respectively)

1. History of the people, news and heritage of the West End district of South Brisbane in particular the history of the Greek community within West End.

2. Modern Australian Art specifically female artists active within Australia during the 1970's and working in non-traditional styles – abstract, expressionist, performance.

3. History of the Samford District, its people and industry.

Appendix I

Serious Leisure – the components

PERSERVERANCE

The need to persevere under adverse conditions – stress, fatigue, anxiety, frustration, injury (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2002; Yarnal & Dowler 2002/2003) or preservation of skills (Delamare and Shaw 2006) or status.

LEISURE CAREER

The personal path shaped by "special contingencies, turning points, and stages of achievement or involvement" (Stebbins 2001, p.9). That progression includes stages such as awareness of the activity/entity, engaging with the concept behind the activity/entity, involvement in the pursuit or performance of the entity/activity, creation of an (alternative) identity that revolves around the activity/entity.

SIGNIFICANT EFFORT

The endeavours required to acquire and develop special knowledge, training, experience and/or skills (Arai 2000; Gravelle & Larocque 2005). Also includes the element of perseverance that includes efforts made to remain involved in the activity or with the entity.

UNIQUE ETHOS

The distinguishing ideals, values or sentiments shared by SL participants in a particular area or by a community of SL. Researchers have noted a SL social world (Brown 2007; Green & Jones 2005; Yair 1992)

STRONG IDENTIFICATION

Pride taken in involvement with the SL activity/entity and willingness of participants to present themselves in terms of their SL pursuit. (Stebbins 1982, p.257)

DURABLE OUTCOMES

Positive consequences derived from participation in SL. Self-enrichment arising from increasing spiritual or intellectual resources. Self-actualisation resulting from realisation of one's talents, capacities and potential (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber 1991). Self-expression, self-gratification arising from the fusion of fun and enjoyment with deep personal fulfillment (Stebbins1982, 2001). Social reward derived from participation and association with a group including sociability and comradeship.

(Stebbins, 1982, p.257)

Appendix J

Detailed discussion of Interview Questions Phase 1 of piloting

Question 1.

Tell me about your volunteer role.

It was determined that the style of question was appropriate as an introduction to the interview as it allowed the interviewee to talk about themselves, the area in which they are most expert and become more relaxed with the interview format. When people talk about themselves they typically do so in an unguarded fashion (it is most people's favourite topic). As a result, opening with a question about them provides an opportunity to gather additional information that might not be elicited by the other interview questions, especially if the interviewee finds any difficulty in relating their experiences to the interview questions. Also, given that the people being interviewed are engaged in a leisure activity that defines a significant part of their identity and is, subsequently, of great importance to their life, it is important to give them an opportunity to discuss that personal element. The major problem with the question is its use of the term 'volunteer'. In emphasising that term we run the risk of having the interviewee only discuss their Serious Leisure engagement within the confines of their volunteer role and not their engagement and pursuit of it in all other aspects of their life.

Question 1.1

- **Can you expand on that volunteer role – do you liaise with other people, do you do one specific job or do you have multiple jobs that you perform?**

Apart from emphasising the term 'volunteer', which will be removed in the second phase of piloting, the question is potentially leading the interviewees to answer in a particular way, as well as furnishing them with potential answer ands, subsequently, interfering with the integrity of the interview.

As was mentioned at an earlier stage, it is important for an interviewee to be given the opportunity to reflect on their experience of the phenomenon in question. That can mean using probes or follow-up questions such as Q 1.1. The aim is to have the interviewee expand on the information they have provided and provide as fully realized an answer as possible. In certain cases the question may not be necessary if the interviewee has been particularly expansive in their original answer. With Question 1.1 the aim was to direct the interviewee's thinking towards a particular aspect of their volunteer role, namely their interactions with other members of the organisation and the breadth of jobs they might undertake. However, while it was acceptable to ask them to expand on their original answer asking them who they liaise with makes the question a leading one.

Question 2.

How do you use information in your volunteer role?

It had been anticipated that this question would provide an opening or avenue for interviewees to discuss their use of information within their serious leisure career. Structurally, the question is particularly simple and contains no terminology or jargon that would be inaccessible to the interview cohort. It is also free from any potential bias and, as it does not mention any potential information avenues or sources, it doesn't preempt the respondents. Therefore, the answers given by interviewees would be their interpretation of the term 'information' and would allow for an understanding of the way in which they constitute that term.

Ultimately, the question did work particularly well in eliciting a strong and full response from the interviewees. In each case they were able to freely and openly discuss the ways in which they use information and, in so doing, provide an understanding of what that term 'information', means to them. However, with the inclusion of the term 'volunteer' they have been directed towards one specific aspect of their serious leisure career and it is very possible that their answers may have differed if that constraint was lifted. Subsequently, it will be removed during the second phase of piloting.

Alternative Question(s):

2.1 Describe the experience of effective information use in your role as a volunteer

Again, inclusion of the term 'volunteer' makes the question unsuitable for the aims of this study and will need to be rewritten or removed at the next phase of piloting. This question was included as an alternative to question 2, 'How do you use information in your volunteer role', to be used if the interviewee had difficulties understanding and interpreting that primary question. Unlike the primary question this alterative used the phrase ' effective information use'. The reason for that inclusion was in case the interviewee had difficulty unpacking the primary question this alterative would attempt to guide them towards the idea of information use as a means of successfully completing tasks or learning, as it relates to their serious leisure activity. Ultimately, the interviewees did not have any difficulty with the primary question and this alternative wasn't needed. However, when it was presented to the interview cohort they all found difficulty in coming to grips with the idea of 'effective information use'. While use of that term did require them to be somewhat reflective regarding the way they use information in their volunteer role it did also appear to provoke a negative reaction wherein the question was judging the quality of their work and their ability to perform it effectively. That resulted in very abrupt and defensive responses such as, "I think my work proves I know how to use information effectively", "I think everything I told you shows I know how to be effective" and "I wouldn't be given any work to do if I wasn't effective". None of those

responses provide any depth and all appear to have interpreted the question as a personal affront. All of that, in turn, interrupted the flow of the interview and required the interview reassuring the interviewees that neither the caliber of their work or their ability to perform it to a high standard was being called into question.

Question 3.

Describe a time when you used information to learn about the area in which you volunteer.

This question was included as a means of examining 'learning' as it relates to the interviewee's serious leisure activity. In that regard it foreshadowed the second phase of piloting where learning becomes central to the research. However, at this stage it was not very well developed and lacked a definite sense of purpose. Certainly, it generated a good response from interviewees and was both highly accessible and understandable. However, it really appeared to operate in isolation to the other questions, as it was the first one to direct their attention away from the act of volunteering to the area in which they volunteer. As a result it seemed to be somewhat out of place, in the context of the other questions. That being the case it is not surprising that it was invariably confused with question four in that interviewees would discuss a time they used information to perform their volunteer role rather than to learn about their area of interest as it related to their volunteer position. It can be surmised that the confusion occurred because as all of the preceding questions had been addressing volunteering the interviewees naturally

reframed question three to fit that paradigm. In order to retain the value shown by the question but increase its effectiveness for the research project, the word 'volunteer' will need to be removed. Doing so will focus the interviewee's attention on the process of learning within the context of their serious leisure activity.

Ultimately, the question's greatest value is that it highlighted the degree to which the other questions had focussed on the process of volunteering instead of on information, experience or learning which are the three key ingredients in the second stage of piloting.

Question 4.

Describe a time when you used information to perform your role as a volunteer.

As explained previously, this question was invariably answered out of order. While that can be rectified by reversing the order in which they are asked the error itself is of interest. The interviewees chose to discuss their use of information to perform their role (as volunteer or Serious Leisure practitioner) rather than their use of information as a means by which to develop knowledge of their SL activity. What does that tell us about their attitude towards SL and towards information? Does it suggest that information is not merely something to be acquired in order to develop oneself as an expert but, rather, as a means by which to engage with an audience and to perform a particular function? Is this an extension of SL, people develop an identity around their SL activity and, having developed that identity, want to engage with others from within the cocoon of that

identity. In other words, there is no point being an expert if you can't prove it to others. Ultimately, does that mean they experience information as a social tool (whether they are aware of it or not) ? Is the answer affected by the environment in which the person is operating (within an organisation rather than with complete autonomy)?

Additional Questions to be asked if time permits, the interview allows and/or circumstances require an additional alternative question.

- **Describe what you consider information to be.**

The aim of the question was simply to see how the interviewees might articulate their understanding of what is a particularly abstract concept. The expectation was that it might provide some interesting responses but, as it asks the interviewees to deal with an abstract concept, it might also fall quite flat and not provide any meaningful data. However, given that one of the aims of the pilot interview is to test the interview questions it was decided that it would be included and asked if time permitted.

Unsurprisingly, the question did cause a certain level of confusion for the interviewees. While they were all able to articulate an answer those responses were, typically, brief and potentially of little use to the study as a whole. While the answers were somewhat interesting there appears to be little value in asking them to elaborate on a topic (information) that can be decidedly abstract. Also, their answer should be found within the other questions.

- **Where do you gather your information from – sources, etc?**

Again, this question was asked more out of a curiosity regarding the interviewee's relationship to information than in the expectation that the answers provided would fit the research topic. In that regard it is poorly designed. However, in its desire to explore the interrelationship between the interviewee and 'information' it, like the other 'Additional Questions' presages the second phase of piloting. In that second stage the emphasis moves to the interviewee's serious leisure activity in general and not merely as it is expressed within their volunteer capacity. However, that said, it is not a question which will be retained at the next stage of piloting. The reason being that it is a question that will be answered at other stages of the interview process. That is, when the interviewee is discussing the way in which they experience using information in order to learn – which is the form the research topic takes in its second phase – they will be providing all of the information necessary to answer this specific question. Indeed, they will also be describing what they consider information to be (every answer they provide will tell us that, the researcher only needs to examine the data closely enough) and if they utilise any filters or biases or other forms of discretion when selecting information.

- **What filters do you use, if any, for your selection of information?**
- **On what basis do you select your information?**

These questions, which essentially ask the same thing, were intended to be used as prompts if an interviewee was finding it difficult to engage with the primary questions or

if it was decided that more information was required. The first alternative is considerably more heavy-handed than the first and by blatantly asking what filters or screening process the interviewee uses when selecting information it is potentially leading them to discuss something that might not be part of their experience of the phenomenon in question. If they do use filters then that information should emerge more organically (without coercion) at other stages of the interview process. If it doesn't emerge then it will not be prompted for.. In regard to the second alternative, while it is far subtler than the first the actual information should still be found within those responses provided to other questions. That being the case, both questions will be removed at the second phase of piloting and greater care will need to be taken by the researchers to ensure that, should they want an answer to those particular questions, they will need to closely examine the responses provided to other questions within the interview.

Appendix K

Detailed discussion of Interview Questions Phase 2 of piloting and Main Study

1. Tell me about your interest in Heritage

As with the introductory question in phase one, this question was intended to provide a gentle introduction to the interview process for the selected interviewees. Being particularly open-ended and directed towards the personal relationship that exists between the interviewees and their area of serious leisure interest it was anticipated that all of the interviewees would be able to engage with it. Once they had engaged with the preliminary question it was anticipated that they would become more comfortable with the overall interview process and, given that the question did not have any element of 'right' or 'wrong' it could also make them feel more at ease in providing answers to subsequent questions. Apart from making the interviewees comfortable, the question would focus their attention on the research area of 'heritage'. The feeling being that if they were to gain that focus at the very beginning of the interview session it might cause them to interpret subsequent questions within the context of their serious leisure activity. Despite the desire to frame the question within the context of their serious leisure activity, the term 'heritage' was used instead of 'serious leisure'. The reason being that there was no expectation that the interviewees would be aware that they were actually engaged in a 'serious leisure' activity.

When presented to the interviewees, the question performed very much as expected. The respondents, given the opportunity to speak freely about subjects they were interested in and intimately familiar with their serious leisure activity and themselves, spoke freely and at length. The end result was a series of extensive responses that proved valuable in understanding the ways in which the interviewees experience using information in order to learn

Additional Questions:

- **How did you come to be interested in this area of Heritage?**

As with question one this is a highly generic and non-threatening question that provided the interviewees with a gentle introduction to the interview. It was proposed only in the situation where the interviewee was either having difficulty talking or more information was deemed necessary. It was not required in any of the three interviews conducted in the second phase of piloting (the information was provided while answering question one. However, as there will be approximately 20 interviews conducted over the course of the project, this question is included as a safeguard should at least one of the interviewees struggle to engage with the interview process. While it isn't anticipated that any will have difficulties and while the questions have been designed to be as accessible as possible, it is still important to have another option if any problems occur. With a viable alternative question ready to be included, should the need arise, the interview uninterrupted and with no disruption to the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee.

- **How do you pursue or express that interest in heritage/your heritage area?**

As with the first of the additional questions, the intention in this instance is to safeguard against a situation where an interviewee struggles to feel comfortable with the interview process and is unable to provide an answer of any significant depth to the original primary question. Unlike the first of the additional questions this one was trialed during the pilot interviews. The reason for testing it was to see how much more information it might deliver, that was not gained from the primary question, and to see whether interviewees responded more or less favourably to one over the other.

The results would suggest that, while interviewees did appear to engage with the question and it proved a good way of finding out what tools they use to deal with information within their Serious Leisure activity, the answers tended to be very brief. When asked to elaborate, the typical response was that the interviewees felt they had already provided the same data when answering the first question. That being the case and not wanting to compromise the effectiveness of the interviews by unsettling the interviewees it is anticipated that the question will only be utilised should the primary question fail to elicit a detailed response.

1. **Can you describe a time you used information to learn about your Heritage interest?**

This question was included as it provides a means of steering the interview and, subsequently, the interviewee's thoughts, toward the issue of learning as it relates to their Serious Leisure activity. In each of the interviews, at the second phase of piloting, the question elicited a strong response from interviewees. Having their thoughts directed towards the process of learning and the correlation that exists between it and information, they were able to talk about their serious leisure activity in a more focussed way than in Question 1. In that instance they spoke openly but generally and any statements that linked the two concepts, information and learning, had to be unearthed by the researcher during the data analysis phase. However, with this question the interviewees were able to supply a strong and useful cache of data. Comments such as, "there isn't a time that I don't use information to learn, it's what learning is made up of", "every time I talk to someone else who is interested in the same thing as me, I'm learning and using information I gathered somewhere else to talk to them and understand what they're talking about", "reading a book, reading a sign, talking to a person, thinking to myself, they're all times and ways I use information to learn". In addition to the valuable data provided by the interviewees this was also a question they seemed able to answer passionately, as can be seen in the selected quotes previously given.

2. **What kinds of information have you used and/or do you use to learn about your heritage interest?**

In terms of intent the question was devised to provide a way to further uncover the types of information utilised by interviewees, in their serious leisure activity and, in so doing, gain a great understanding of what they consider information to be. That data is gathered without leading respondents to explicitly discuss tools, techniques or attitudes to information. On the contrary, the interviewee has to unpack the question and, in answering it, decide what they consider information to be. Although this appeared to be very similar in nature to question 2 it was found, during piloting, that it served a different purpose. Whereas in question 2 the interviewees answered in terms of situations or circumstances where they used information to learn in question 3 they seemed to broaden their understanding of the question and discuss the range of information sources and materials they utilised. Obviously, in an interview where the respondent, in answering one question, provides the answers to both question two and three, it will not be necessary to ask both. However, in each of the three pilot interviews conducted at stage two of piloting, that did not happen and both questions were utilised.

3. **What part does information play in pursuing/engaging with your heritage interest?**

As expected, this proved to be a difficult question for interviewees to answer. They are being asked to think deeply about their relationship with and experience of information and how it influences their engagement with their Serious Leisure activity. Despite that

difficulty and despite each interviewee acknowledging that it was not 'easy to answer' they all did address the question and did provide quite meaningful as well as useful answers. Coming at the end of the interview session it is worth retaining as I believe it could provide additional value as a reflective question in which the interviewees, having answered the first few questions, are able to use it to reflect back on the answers they've given. Or, the initial questions may have put them in a reflective enough state to answer it.

Alternative Question 4

- **In experiencing (pursuing/engaging with) your heritage interest, what part does information play?**

This alternative was not used in any of the three pilot interviews (at phase two of piloting) but will be retained as an alternative to question four. As with other alternative questions, the primary aim is to have a back-up option should the interviewee struggle to relate to the principle question. However, the intention is precisely the same. That is, to provide a means by which the interviewees can discuss their relationship with information, within the context of their Serious Leisure activity. One concern is that the wording of the question may prove somewhat problematic for the interviewees. While the primary question is clear and doesn't include any nebulous concepts, this alternative does ask them to formulate an understanding of experience and information as well as the relationship both has to their Serious Leisure activity. It may be that they have no

difficulty in answering it; however, it is anticipated that if it were to be used it might need some clarification.

5. How do you use information to learn about your heritage interest?

As with question four, this was considered to be a potentially difficult question as it deals with an abstract concept, 'information'. However, none of the interviewees had any difficulty in providing an answer although each of them did make mention that they believed they had answered the question elsewhere in the interview. In their opinion, discussing the kinds of information they use and the part it plays in their area of interest illustrated fully how they use information to learn about their Serious Leisure activity. Given that response, it would appear likely the question will be omitted from the next phase of piloting.